

The SMART SET

Edited by
George Jean Nathan
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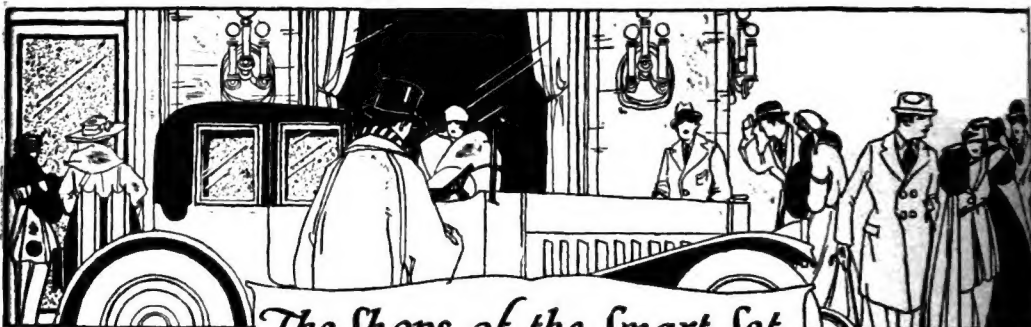



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The
SMART SET
The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines



Cadenza for Tubas in E Flat

By Hartley H. Hepler

IT is night, a night of witchery. I leap,
 I dance, I sing.

Suddenly my mood changes, and a
 flood of memories overwhelms me.

I remember my first sweetheart, her
 first kiss. I see again, vividly, the mel-
 low and glorious moons that made in-
 toxicating the nights of my youth.
 Once more my blood leaps to the whis-
 per of a name, and the night wind is
 filled with music and, as it tosses my

hair, I seem to feel again the slender
 white fingers that it once knew slipping
 lovingly through the curls.

Oh, glorious hours of youth! Oh,
 vanished springtime of life! Oh, mem-
 ories of warm, fragrant lips, of whis-
 pered I-love-yous! Oh, moments of
 divine madness! Gone. As they flash
 before me I weep bitterly, hopelessly,
 noisily.

Drunk again.



The Pioneers

By T. F. Mitchell

MAN'S discoveries and inventions have all been duly recorded and chronicled. We know who conferred on the race the boon known as the automatic piano. We are familiar with the name of the inventor of the folding bed, and the originator of the collapsible stepladder. The discoverers of Epsom salts, poison gas, heatless trouser pressers, alarm clocks and celluloid collars are enshrined in the hall of fame. But how about the girls? What was the name of the damsel who first discovered the efficacy of tears? What maiden originated the non-committal smile? Who was the fair one who learned first how potent in its effect is a stray curl against the masculine cheek? What feminine pioneer explored the tremendous possibilities of the wink? Up historians and let us have the facts!



Whom Shall I Love?

By Leonard Hinton

WHOM shall I love tomorrow?
Who, next year
Shall make this mouth to laugh, this pulse to leap?
Let no red dream, no lurking sorrow
Thrust, like a flame, 'twixt now and then, to sear
My wreath of perfect moments ere I fall asleep.

To love,—that's to die, I know,
For all loves die,
And grave-dust shrouds the whilom trysting-bower.
But yet a little grant the glow
Of new love's birth, and new love's waking cry,
That shall forbid grief wasted on a vanished hour.

Only in desolate dusks
Shall stubborn fears
Of last grim days arise, with all loves past,
When I, before a feast of husks,
With mist and wood-smoke that have still their way
To Memory, sitting opposite,—and break my glass.



The Best

(*A Complete Short Novel*)

By *Thyra Samter Winslow*

Author of "A Cycle of Manhattan," etc.

CHAPTER I

"THE FLESHPOTS," at the Cosmopolite Theatre, is New York's smartest revue. Its annual first night is attended by New York's most ornate Bohemians, artists on canvas, the stage and the screen, editors, publishers, critics, dilettanti, professional beauties, theatre managers, patrons of the arts with their families, society, in a way, and all manner of climbers. The members of the audience know each other and most of the cast. Everything about the first night of "The Fleshpots" is important, from the opening number to the color of the newest dancer's hair.

If you are an ordinary New Yorker, but still have your pride, you go to "The Fleshpots" during the first three weeks of the run, even if you have to sit upstairs, though you don't tell that part of it when you remark, casually, to anyone who will listen, that you've seen the new "Fleshpots" and, while it really isn't up to last year's show, still the finale with the fans really is lovely, and how on earth do they ever think up things like that number with the electric lights, and isn't Myrtle Ryder a scream, especially in that skit where the twin beds walk right off the stage by themselves. If you are an out-of-town buyer or a mere visitor, one of the hundreds of thousands who fill up the largest hotels in the world—two thousand rooms each and each room with its own bath—you

always attend "The Fleshpots" on either your first or your second night in town. You even buy tickets from a speculator, though you try to do the rest of your theatrical shopping more economically at Grey's. "The Fleshpots" is always the best thing in town, the one show you daren't miss if you intend to go home and talk about your trip to the city—and, after all, isn't that what you came for?

Sylvia Brennan was a show girl in "The Fleshpots." Being a show girl in "The Fleshpots" is an important position. It was important to Sylvia. It represented to her, for a while at least, the acme of all ambition, the highest and best possible achievement of a pretty girl.

To be a show girl in "The Fleshpots" means that you have to win the approval of three of the most severe critics of feminine beauty in New York: George Roper, who puts on "The Fleshpots" musical numbers; Herman Gruener, critic and artist, who stages the pseudo-classic tableaux which pass so easily for art and which each year are always an infinitesimal degree more daring, and Maximilian Harper, who once carried the briefer patronymic, Max Hopp, the owner of "The Fleshpots." Roper goes through a pretense of testing voices—someone in "The Fleshpots" chorus has got to sing. No really beautiful girl has ever failed of admission into the Cosmopolite because her voice was inadequate. Several of the loveliest show

girls, in fact, have been asked not to make any sound at all, but just to go through a pantomime of singing. The girls for "The Fleshpots" are selected for their eyes, their skins, their hair, the shape of their limbs and torsos, their grace of carriage or ability to learn—and frequently even by their more personal charms. As an average of eight hundred girls, the pick of all professional chorus girls, kept women and ambitious amateurs apply each year for places in "The Fleshpots" and as sixty are chosen, it really means something to get in, so far as looks are concerned, especially without influence. Half of the girls, perhaps, do have influence of a sort which needn't be gone into closely, save perhaps in a treatise on the morals of the American stage. Thirty of the girls, then, are chosen for their stage charm and beauty. Sylvia Brennan was one of the favored thirty.

CHAPTER II

WHEN Sylvia Brennan, at the age of eighteen, ran away from St. Louis, Missouri, she did not aim at "The Fleshpots" in her flight. She didn't even know where she was going. All she knew was that she was getting away from and wanted something better than St. Louis, Missouri.

In legend, usually, girls come from gray little towns. The only cities with fictional recognition are New York, Chicago and now the painted woman of the Coast, Los Angeles. Yet there exists a full hundred cities from which girls might come. Given a choice, Sylvia would never have chosen St. Louis. She hated it as long as she could remember. Perhaps it was the poverty she hated and the environment into which her parents thrust her. Quite likely, if she had lived west of King's Boulevard, in a neat gray stone house—a St. Louis idea of elegance—with servants and cars, she would have been quite satisfied. Perhaps not. From the first there was a certain uneasy stirring in her, a desire to do something, to be somebody, to have the best, an exhibition complex,

likely as not, overemphasized because she had nothing at all.

The Brennans lived in a cheap, noisy street in the second story of a dingy two-family house, "a St. Louis flat" it was called. They lived there from the time Sylvia was six, so she did not remember any other habitation. The families in the flat below came and went, so she remembered a number of those. There was a drunken plumber and his wife who had disturbing fights on Saturday nights and frequently, contrary to tradition, all day Sundays, too. Next was a family of women who seemed quite generously supplied with masculine callers and played a piano half the night and cursed in chorus when Sylvia's father suggested that their enjoyment be continued in a less rapid tempo.

Sylvia liked those women and got into conversations with them whenever she could. She liked the way they dressed. They gave her empty candy boxes with bows of real ribbon on them. She knew that there was something wrong with them and she found out what it was before they moved away, which was when she was twelve. They became her most pleasant memory of St. Louis. A morose baker who slept days, the most inconvenient neighbor possible for an active child, followed.

The family who came when Sylvia was fourteen stayed until she left home. It consisted of parents, negligible to her for they were not the feeding kind; a tall girl named Roberta and another girl named Favie. Favie was baby-talk for Fanny, Sylvia learned. For a long time she thought that Favie was a child of three or four who happened to be fat and slow-witted. Later, she learned that Favie was older than Roberta, eighteen, a dwarf, the family said. Always, Sylvia remembered that large, unsteady head, set without neck on little, inadequate shoulders, the flat, thick face, the drooling mouth and Favie's guttural, indistinct speech.

Sylvia's own family had five members. Her father was a thin, silent, stubborn man who clerked in an unfashionable men's furnishing store. Her

mother was a round little woman with sleek brown hair which she did into a little knob at the top of her head. In the back there were always strands escaping and lying on her neck. Her face was round and yet wrinkled, too, and she had a way of nodding as if in agreement while you were talking and yet never agreeing at all. She was a whining, envious little woman, always complaining about her lot in life and the ingratitude of her children, though so far as Sylvia could find out, the most she had done for them was to have brought them into the world, and as Sylvia grew older she wasn't at all sure that even that had been a voluntary procedure. The only son of the family was named Jim. He didn't amount to a great deal. He always knew all of the baseball scores and could answer the most intricate questions concerning his favorite sport. Her older sister, Josie, married before Sylvia was grown up. Her second sister, Mabel, blondined her hair and she and her chum giggled over, to Sylvia, the most obvious and uninteresting things and liked the most impossible and unattractive males. Sylvia was the youngest member of the family.

Sylvia went to school until she was fourteen and through with grammar school. The family lived in Finney Avenue, a street devoted to cheap stores, boarding-houses and homes of the poorer sort. Half of the men in Finney Avenue wore uniforms during business hours, conductors, motormen, policemen, firemen, elevator starters. After school, and all day long after her formal education was completed, Sylvia played around the streets—a surface car ran in front of the door. Her name at fourteen was Susie, though she changed it to Sylvia before she adopted a stage career.

Sylvia went with a representative group of the neighborhood, rag, tag and bob-tail as to appearance, but not unwholesome morally. Sylvia's crowd always had a preponderance of boys in it and were inclined to sports that started "I bet you you don't dare—" or "Aw, you can't do—." Days, the crowd "ran

around." Night times, they met "on the corner," under an electric light, as long as the weather permitted, and engaged in rough but not particularly vicious games.

At sixteen, Sylvia began looking at boys. The motormen's sons of the neighborhood no longer attracted her. She was pretty, even then. She was tall and a bit too slim, with eyes perhaps too much like the lithograph school of art for actual perfection. They were of a peculiarly deep red-brown and her lashes were long and dark. These were her best features. Her hair, then, was nondescript, rather thin and straight and of an uneven color. Her nose was straight and unobtrusive. Her mouth was a trifle colorless and not a particularly good shape, but unnoticeable enough. The oval of her face was attractive and her body, always particularly well formed, was starting to round into womanhood, now.

Sylvia's chum was named Hortense Freund. She lived a couple of blocks up the street and her mother kept a rooming-house which boasted a doctor as its chief paying guest. Hortense and Sylvia discovered Grand Avenue together. Grand Avenue is a street of shops and motion picture theatres and life. At night it is bright and busy. Girls stroll down Grand Avenue in twos or threes, dressed in gaudy finery, giggling, self-conscious, waiting to be interrupted by boys of about their own age. If you were an especially pretty girl and walked down Grand Avenue when Sylvia was sixteen it was quite likely that you would be picked up by gay and apparently wealthy youths in an automobile. How cheap they did make the rest of the fellows seem! Sylvia and Hortense nearly always found that the fates allotted an automobile to them.

Sylvia was "a good girl." She learned that, in order to earn the automobile ride and the supper in the cheap café which followed, she had to go through a certain amount of lovemaking. She thought it quite all right to tell the boys, "I ain't the kind of a girl who goes too far." She usually didn't even enjoy the

lovmaking. The boys were pimply and stupid. She did enjoy the excitement, dressing every evening after supper, getting away from home, strolling up Grand Avenue in search of romance.

A year later, Sylvia had outgrown Grand Avenue. She could tell at a glance what the boys were going to say. The older ones grew insulting. The younger ones were silly. They thought she was beautiful and told her so, of course. Well, wasn't she? Hortense might be satisfied with this sort of thing. She wasn't. She wanted something better.

Her mother, of course, complained of her conduct, not from ethics or etiquette involved in making the acquaintance of strange young men in a street that did not have a particularly savory reputation, but because "she's always on the go—never gets home till all hours—after all I've done for her won't listen to a thing I say."

CHAPTER III

SYLVIA grew tired of cheap things, her home, her boy friends. She wanted something better. She didn't know where to look for it. Finally she decided that she might as well go to work. Other girls worked. She got a job in a second-class department store.

She hated the long hours, always getting up in the morning early and at the same time, taking a long ride to the store, waiting on impatient women who never quite knew what they wanted.

In the store, Sylvia learned things, unconsciously at first and then with a determined, almost a fierce, desire. She saw how inadequate she was—her family, too. She had cheap ways. She said the wrong things, wore cheap clothes. She started copying the people around her, a girl from a fairly good family who was trying to work her way up to buyer, the shoppers who came to the store in search of bargains.

A few months later Sylvia managed to get a place in a better department store. She learned more things about speech and clothes. She listened to the

women who came in. Even while she hated them for being "stuck up" she was willing to learn what they could teach her in a five minutes' conversation about ribbons.

"Who are they?" she'd say to herself. "I bet they're not a bit better than I am. I'd look more like a lady than that fat elephant if I had some money and a few clothes—head up in the air that way—that awful thing."

However, it seemed the way to hold one's head. Sylvia's head was higher, after that.

A sale in the Misses' Department and Sylvia was put in to help take care of the extra trade. She tried on a couple of coats for women who couldn't wait for a regular model. This was one of the few department stores in St. Louis that had models, though Sylvia didn't know that.

A week later, back in the ribbons again, she got word that she was wanted in the office. All the way there she tried to go over in her mind all of the things she had done which deserved a "call down." She went into the office with a tight look around her mouth and her head high. She didn't want to be fired.

Of course it wasn't a reprimand. The manager's secretary sent her to the buyer for misses' dresses. In a dressing-room a woman took her measurements, another tried a frock on her, watched her, asked questions. She was a model!

Sylvia liked modeling. She loved an excuse for admiring herself, for allowing people to look at her. For the first time in her life her exhibition complex had full sway. Here she was, beautiful, young, with the admiring eyes of everyone turned toward her.

She liked wearing the little silk undergarments over which she slipped the dresses she wore. She had worn cheap, machine-made muslins, always gray or blue from poor laundering. The silk felt soft against her skin. She bought, at employees' rates, new clothes, choosing the newest things—the newest in St. Louis, that is. When frocks arrived

from New York, she would try them all on with an almost desperate eagerness and wish that they were all hers. Still, they were all hers in a way. They belonged to her more than to anyone else in the store. She could wear them, parading in front of the mothers of awkward girls, letting ill-formed daughters of the new-rich admire her. She learned little business tricks, how to look superior and indifferent, to walk and to sit down.

Sylvia's hair, which was her worst feature, grew to look a little better now. She frizzed it a trifle too much and puffed it more than was necessary. She knew that her eyes and skin were good. She grew used to hearing people say, "What a beautiful girl—what wonderful eyes!" when she passed them. She even expected it.

She was leading a sort of double life, though she didn't realize it. All day, in the store, she was superior, a bit haughty—to the customers, that is. The saleswomen, even the good ones who made quite a lot of money with their commissions, and the assistant buyers treated her as an equal. She looked down on the stock girls, stupid, homely little things in rusty black. At home she quarreled with her family, ate poor food poorly prepared, and had a caged-in, restless feeling all of the time. If she had lived in New York she might have taken a room away from home. Such a thing never occurred to her. The girls she knew lived at home and made the best of it.

Sylvia made the best of it for a while. She no longer spent her evenings in Grand Avenue with Hortense. For one thing, she knew too many of the boys, especially those with automobiles, and they knew she wasn't a "good sport." Hortense was still wearing gaudy clothes, still satisfied with the crude love-making and the cheap entertainment furnished by the youths of Grand Avenue.

Without Grand Avenue Sylvia was lonely. After all, she was pretty and she liked boys—men, that is. She wanted to meet men who would take

her to decent places to dinner, who would talk cleverly—or at least her idea of cleverly—who would appreciate her charms, not just say, "Gee, kid, you got grand eyes."

Sylvia went on week-end visits with several of the girls from the store. She found homes a trifle better than her own drab household, but devoid of romance or charm. Young men, brothers and cousins of her fellow employees, offered themselves as sweethearts, even as matrimonial possibilities. She got a few slightly pleasurable emotional thrills from them, but they all seemed stupid and cheap. The clerks in the department store seemed cut off the same pattern of cheapness—silly things, either always funny and silly, or serious and talking about making more money and getting ahead. What if they did make more money? Wouldn't they still be nothing at all—cheap clerks with nothing to look forward to?

There was no man she cared about, so she started to read a little. She was not naturally fond of books, but she found out that books could teach her some of the things she was trying to learn—how nice people—the best people—lived and what they did and said. She was quite sure that they lived in an entirely different world from that of Finney Avenue, that their language, their method of thought, the routine of their lives was altogether different. She read magazines mostly, of rather a sensational character, where luxury and romance were mingled in a way that just appealed to her.

She might have kept on being a model for years if it hadn't been for the family. Her father grew nagging. Her mother misinterpreted the change in her.

If Sylvia had kept on going with cheap youths, coming home at all hours, giggling and acting as foolish as possible, her mother would have scolded her but would have decided that things were all right, anyhow.

There was something wrong with the changed Sylvia, with fashionable clothes, fairly correct English and a way of calling down every member of the fam-

ily for his deflections from her idea of good taste, who stayed home, evenings, and was as likely as not to have red eyes from crying. Mrs. Brennan hinted, none too prettily, that a man had had his way with Sylvia and that, after all the sacrifices she had made bringing her daughter up. . . .

At the store, Sylvia continued to model, but that grew tiresome. She wanted to be real, to belong to something, to be important. What was modeling but pretending to be a lady? Who cared about looking nice, half an hour a day, in borrowed clothes? What if she did put it all over the St. Louis girls in looks? Who knew it? Who were St. Louis girls, anyhow?

When Marjorie Teller, another model, told Sylvia that "The Purple Pansy," a musical comedy playing a week's run in St. Louis, needed chorus girls, Sylvia didn't need much persuading to take a day off and apply, with Marjorie, for the position. The ticket seller at the theatre had told Marjorie. She didn't care much for Sylvia, but she didn't have the courage to enter new fields alone.

Together, the two girls went around to an unfamiliar stage door, down a dusty passage, and talked, quite shyly, to a stage manager. The company needed girls. Three girls had jumped the show, and if you telegraph to New York or Chicago for girls you never know who they will send. Marjorie was pink and blonde, Sylvia was rather lovely with her immense eyes, her straight little nose and the pleasant oval of her cheeks.

The girls were given a try-out. Their voices were fair and they were graceful enough, considering that they were just being picked up on the road. The manager ordered a couple of rehearsals for them, during which a grumpy lot of chorus girls, who hated extra rehearsals while the show was en route, went carelessly through the numbers and gave the two girls no assistance whatever.

Sylvia's set of costumes was too large for her—she was tall, but a bit too thin at eighteen. The wardrobe mistress was

not clever, so during her first theatrical season much of Sylvia's charm was not visible.

CHAPTER IV

SYLVIA didn't say goodbye to her folks. She had had a couple of quarrels with each member of her family and didn't like making up nor leave-taking, anyhow. She wasn't fond of her folks. She felt she would never see any of them again. She hoped not, anyhow. She packed a suitcase with the few good things she had purchased while she was a model.

The show left town Saturday night after the evening performance. At seven, seen only by inquisitive neighbors—her folks had hurried out to a neighborhood picture show—she left the house. She didn't know where the show was going. She didn't care. She was going away from where she had been. As she got on the surface car she glanced back at her old home and saw little Favie walking in indefinite curves around the few feet of gray grass that served as a lawn.

She learned to make up from watching the other girls. She didn't look well that first year because she used too much make-up around her eyes, which were dark and too large.

She liked the theatre from the first. A few weeks of being teased because she was an amateur, during which time she learned never to admit that she still was, according to the general interpretation of the word, virtuous, and she began to fit in. She liked the girls, a careless crowd, good natured, who did not pretend to morals or refinements of any sort. She liked hurrying to the theatre just in time for the half-hour call, shedding her clothes in the always box-like dressing-room, hurrying into make-up and opening number costume. She liked the stage itself, the lights, the artificiality of the scenery, the huge dark pit of audience in front, with three rows of distinguishable faces and then shadowy, indistinct forms going into the background. She liked the glare in her

face, the knowledge that people were looking at her—that she was at least a part of the exhibition they had come to see. She was naturally a good dancer with a sense of rhythm and the dance steps were simple.

The show, luckily, was not of the cheapest variety. It was a second-year company of a Chicago musical comedy which had gained publicity in the Middle West through a successful Chicago run. There were week and split-week stands and Sylvia was spared the usual one-night stands and cheap hotels that so many girls encounter when they first go on the stage. She roomed with a girl named Angie Muray—accent on the last syllable, please. They stayed at second-class hotels, but they were young and not accustomed to nice things, so the food and accommodations seemed rather good to them, though they complained of them.

Sylvia met men, that first season. They were just one class better than the boys she had been picking up in Grand Avenue and she found that the same tricks did very nicely for them. She accepted their cheap after-theatre suppers, which were usually given in one-flight-down imitation rathskellers, which the right sort of girls of the town did not visit. She remained technically as good as ever. Why waste more than the briefest sort of a caress on these rubes, who never gave you more than a cheap meal and whom you'd never see again, anyhow?

At the end of the season the show closed in Chicago. Sylvia liked Chicago. It was alive—better than St. Louis. She found a boarding-house in North Dearborn Street and she and Angie and a girl named Ethel Rieder lived there. Marjorie Teller had jumped the show in New Orleans, but Sylvia hadn't missed her at all.

Ethel Rieder got a job in a specialty shop in Michigan Avenue. It was summer. Sylvia and Angie had a little money so they decided not to work unless they could get something good. They spent a pleasant month or so on the beaches, picking up men whose ap-

pearance pleased them, accepting dinners and dances and whatever other tokens of fleeting admiration they were able to graft.

Sylvia met a chap named Perkins, whom she liked a great deal—was almost in love with. He was a lawyer and she hadn't met any professional men. He read, too, and knew about art and music, things that were unknown to her. Perkins was married and his wife was in Petoskey, Michigan, for the summer. Sylvia wouldn't allow herself to grow too fond of him. Why should she? A married man—a still, formal little fellow like Perkins—wasn't what she was looking for. She let him take her to dinners. She learned things about restaurants and books and men. She forgot him quickly enough when his wife returned, in Autumn.

Her money was gone by September. Angie found a place in a road show and left town. Sylvia didn't want to go on the road. She was about to apply for a position as model, when she learned of a new local musical comedy which was about to open. She applied for a position in the chorus and got it. Wasn't she better looking than most of the girls? A job with a city show! Wasn't that what she deserved, what all the girls aimed at?

Rehearsals—and the show opened. Sylvia settled down to enjoy life. She went on parties after the theatre, not too gay, of course, but lots of fun. She weeded out the "cheap sports" and went only with men who could appreciate her, who would take her to the best restaurants, who could dance well and knew how to order dinner. After all, a show girl with a Chicago show. . . . She frizzed her hair less, now, and learned to make up on the street. Her voice was lower and she could talk better.

Sylvia might have been content to stay in Chicago forever—at least for a few years. Didn't she have the best of everything—clothes, good food, admirers, a position in the best show in town where everyone looks at you? She wasn't in love with anyone, though she had had a few passing fancies. One of

the girls introduced her to Walter Dorrence. Walter was not good-looking nor attractive. She didn't even like him. It was just something he said that got under her skin.

He had taken her to dinner after the theatre. She had nodded to half a dozen acquaintances on the way to her table in the best after-theatre restaurant in town. She was preening herself on her superiority, sitting back in a delightful glow of looking well and being admired. Then:

"Honest," said Dorrence, "it's a shame to see a girl like you wasting yourself in Chicago."

"You think I'm wasted—in Chicago? What do you mean?" Sylvia had been purringly happy with her position. How her folks in St. Louis would feel, if they knew! How her acquaintances from the department stores would envy her!

"Just that. Here you are, way out West, being wasted on the stockyards' air. This bunch of rubes don't know a beauty when they see one. Wheel burlesque, second year New York shows and home-made musical comedies like the ones you grace are their ideas of what go big."

"I suppose you're right. I hadn't thought. But what——"

"Dig out of this town while you're young, child. Five years here and you'll be dead. You're good enough for—why—for the 'Fleshpots.' Give it a try, anyhow. New York—that's a town your size. Everything happens there. Why, New York is the center of the world just now. And here you sit—in Chicago. In New York, on Broadway. . . ."

CHAPTER V

At once, tumbled down Sylvia's security. She had read of New York, but for some reason it had seemed too big, too grand, not for her. She had had a feeling that, after all, there might be a little something—she mightn't quite fit there. Chicago had seemed fine—the best. Now it seemed crude and mid-Western, dirty and windy and cheap.

Even her own show seemed distinctly middle-class, good enough for Chicago—but of course it wouldn't go in the East.

Due to her feelings, Sylvia grew a bit careless about things. She neglected her work, came in late, finally grew impudent to the stage manager. She was fired. She knew she could have got back, if she had wanted to. Her pictures had been in the papers. She was beginning to be a favorite. Why kowtow, ask for favors? Wasn't she good enough for anything? Why be satisfied with Chicago if she could have the best?

She accepted her dismissal almost with a flourish. She packed her bags—there were two suitcases full of things now, and left for New York. Oh, she had liked Chicago all right—the girls, the men. After all, New York is New York. If she really were as beautiful as folks said, she might as well be some place where she'd be appreciated—in New York, the "Fleshpots," even—looked at, admired by thousands—after all. . . .

Sylvia wasn't overcome by the size of New York. On the contrary, she was a trifle disappointed. It seemed quite like Chicago. A bit less windy, a bit less dirty, larger, built in solidier cubes. Broadway was brighter but tawdrier than she had supposed. She got a room in a West Forty-seventh Street theatrical boarding-house that a girl had told her about. She looked up old acquaintances, men she had met in Chicago. She wasn't too cordial to them. After all, if one is going to be a success, it isn't good to have a lot of cheap friends. However, it was nice to know someone. The comedian of the old "Purple Pansy" show had sent her a postcard from New York with his address on it a couple of months before. She telephoned him now, and he took her to a cheap table d'hôte. A traveling salesman took her to the Astor. She picked up a few old acquaintances but she didn't go in for that sort of thing very much any more.

The "Fleshpots" had closed their road season. The new show wouldn't open until well into the Spring. It was

December and cold. Sylvia didn't have money enough to last all winter. She didn't want to get mixed up with a cheap company—let anything have a hold on her.

Her money dribbled down. After all, money was the only thing that counted. She had moods of depression when she felt that was so. Money—years and years and years of earning her own way. Why, yes, she was beautiful now, lovely. Everybody said so. Even so, money was the big thing. It was too bad it did count more than anything else, youth or beauty or charm—or books even, or music or things like that. Money—why with money you'd have a settled, complete sort of feeling. . . .

For the first time Sylvia allowed herself to look into an abyss of a future—of working, of working, of keeping a job, of kow-towing to the man higher up. She had been fired. She hadn't minded it. She could have got her old job back again. But, nevertheless, she had been fired, thrust out. Men! What of them? They only wanted flattery and a chance to be seen with her. No one cared for her, really. The few proposals of marriage she had had had been insincere or the men who had offered themselves had been such boobs that they had been entirely impossible. She was beautiful. Oh, yes. But in a few years—years of living, with looks falling off—and each year new girls coming on, hundreds of new girls from all over the country. What did staying good matter? Or being bad? If you were bad, there wasn't any future in that, or money to live on, unafraid, even. As for romance—if you stayed, well, good, at least there was a chance that something might happen—something—well, matrimony, a safe island. No use thinking about that—she was young and beautiful. . . .

It frightened her, though, that glimpse into dark waters. She picked up a buyer from Des Moines at the Claridge that night and he bought her a dinner and took her to a show. That cheered her up a little. Still—she was all alone—what if things didn't go well?

Two weeks later, through a tip she got from a woman at the rooming-house, she got a job as a model in an exclusive shop in Fifty-seventh Street. She breathed a sigh of relief and settled down. This was living—for a while, anyhow. How silly—of course there hadn't been anything to worry about.

Once more Sylvia plunged into the luxury of lovely things. Everything was far better than she had ever encountered. The St. Louis department store seemed distinctly second-rate, now. Here were gray carpets and soft draperies, little dressing-rooms in gray enamel, with great mirrors set into the walls and fitted with dainty dressing-tables and chairs. The women who shopped were well-groomed, sophisticated.

The quarters for the models were shabby enough, just a bare room, a few ugly chairs, a dilapidated table, a couch, hooks for clothes. What did that matter? Sylvia was already accustomed to things like that—a stage, grand for the audience, shabby and cheap enough behind the scenes.

The owner of the shop, a little Jew, born in Russia, and now, through three changes of names, metamorphosed into a Frenchman, was decent enough to Sylvia, though it was said around the shop that half a dozen of the girls had been his favorites during the past few years. He maintained an apartment for the current favorite, it was said, though he lived in Larchmont, the head of a growing and respected family. Sylvia was almost hurt because he treated her as if she were a piece of furniture, a mannequin without life. Not that she wanted him—but was there something wrong—wasn't she really attractive? Of course she was keeping herself for something better—but she did want the flattery of a temptation.

The models and the saleswomen were quite her sort, she felt, though of course not so beautiful nor ambitious. They all had little sophisticated affectations, had aped their better customers so that, outwardly, they were sleek and finished and superior.

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Once more Sylvia plunged into the luxury of lovely things. Everything was far better than she had ever encountered. The St. Louis department store seemed distinctly second-rate, now. Here were gray carpets and soft draperies, little dressing-rooms in gray enamel, with great mirrors set into the walls and fitted with dainty dressing-tables and chairs. The women who shopped were well-groomed, sophisticated.

The quarters for the models were shabby enough, just a bare room, a few ugly chairs, a dilapidated table, a couch, hooks for clothes. What did that matter? Sylvia was already accustomed to things like that—a stage, grand for the audience, shabby and cheap enough behind the scenes.

The owner of the shop, a little Jew, born in Russia, and now, through three changes of names, metamorphosed into a Frenchman, was decent enough to Sylvia, though it was said around the shop that half a dozen of the girls had been his favorites during the past few years. He maintained an apartment for the current favorite, it was said, though he lived in Larchmont, the head of a growing and respected family. Sylvia was almost hurt because he treated her as if she were a piece of furniture, a mannequin without life. Not that she wanted him—but was there something wrong—wasn't she really attractive? Of course she was keeping herself for something better—but she did want the flattery of a temptation.

The models and the saleswomen were quite her sort, she felt, though of course not so beautiful nor ambitious. They all had little sophisticated affectations, had aped their better customers so that, outwardly, they were sleek and finished and superior.

Sylvia, who learned quickly enough, soon became of their pattern. She learned more about make-up than she had ever known in the chorus. She had always made up mechanically, like all of the other girls, a daub of red for cheeks, a cupid's bow mouth, thin arched brows, exaggerated, beaded lashes. Now she learned how to bring out her own beauty, to darken her lids and the corners of her eyes, to touch her mouth a fresh red but to leave her lashes and her cheeks entirely alone. She achieved a natural appearance, as if she weren't made up at all that made customers exclaim, "There, that model, if I had her skin and eyes—"

Sylvia had her hair henna'd. She had it waved two or three times a week, in soft, even waves that made it look thicker. With her fair skin and copper-toned hair, her too-large eyes emphasized by clever make-up, dressed in sleek fashions that were just coming in, she looked lovely and fragile, valuable in a sort of touch-me-not way.

She had very little money. She was not clever at grafting. Wages were not high. She had moved to a better boarding-house. Clothes and accessories cost money and she wanted only the best, though she never had many things. Keeping well-groomed, manicures, waves, shampoos, cost money, too. She just about made both ends meet. Sometimes she was a little in debt. What did that matter? Wasn't she learning, getting ahead?

She met men, of course. The girls at the shop were always going to parties and taking her with them. She visited the smartest cabarets and after-theatre restaurants. She had a couple of evening gowns, made up inexpensively from remnants in the shop. She felt she looked better than most girls she saw, no matter where she was. The men did not attract her a great deal, though one or two gave her passing thrills. Those that were "fresh" were repulsed easily enough—there was nothing really fascinating about them. Sylvia did the most unconventional things, visiting with other girls, at bachelor apartments,

going on automobile rides, turning up at road houses for suppers at all hours. Yet she remained untouched simply because the men did not appeal to her, did not seem her equal, in any way.

On the whole, though, she was happy. excepting once in a while, after parading before thick dowagers and their scrawny offsprings, the thought came to her that they were the ones who had things—who had the best—that after all, with all of her beauty, she had nothing, that her life was still the same sort of a false pretense it had always been. These same ugly women who wore the gowns because they thought they would look the way she did in them—they had a real life. They kept on—in the picture. They went out to waiting limousines and were driven to country homes or town houses. They kept on getting the best. They didn't have to worry. They didn't have to worry about buying a pair of new shoes or a new hat. They were real, with all of their ugliness. They had a future, of comfort, of real things. What could she do—when she got old—if she didn't get a good job in a year or two, even? What did people do? What became of people—of pretty girls—who were all alone?

CHAPTER VI

IN April, the "Fleshpots" started rehearsals. Sylvia read about it in the *Morning Telegraph* and was filled, immediately, with unrest. She pulled the few wires she could—she had heard that it was impossible to get even a hearing, if you were unknown.

Finally, from six different people, who may or may not have had the right to give them, she obtained cards or notes of introduction. One or two, who claimed to know Roper or Gruener, even promised to telephone to them about her.

Almost cold with nervousness, she went to the office in the Cosmopolite Theatre Building. In the elevator she called upon her God, whom she had neglected a bit in the past, and muttered, under her breath, "Oh, God, get me in."

I got to get in, help me, God, I got to get in."

She never remembered the details of that morning's visit. There was an office boy, a delay, then some questions. She was ushered, then, into a small room where a half dozen men were sitting around. They asked more questions, looked her over as if she were a pet animal for sale. She was used to that. Finally, she was told to come to a rehearsal the following week. She went back to the shop in a glow of wonder and enthusiasm and gave up her job at once.

A week of waiting, of anxiety. Three weeks of rehearsal, the same sort of rehearsal she had had in Chicago and yet a hundred times more nerve-biting. Would they keep her? They were keeping dozens of girls they couldn't use, letting some go every day. Didn't all the girls say that sometimes they kept you until the last minute and then let you go. No one gave her any encouragement. She worked hard, tried to learn quickly. The steps were easy. She was tall, a show girl. The little girls did all the hard work, the dancing. Were they going to keep her? Why didn't they tell her? When she met acquaintances she never told them that she was rehearsing with the "Fleshpots." The humiliation of a probably later confession that she hadn't got in, after all, would have been too hard to bear.

She lost twelve pounds, which she could not afford. Long hours of rehearsal—long hours of waiting. There were rehearsals with the principals, finally, and a lot of talk about "no one staying unless she has influence."

Sylvia stayed. She tossed, nervously, at night, and her days were always unreal.

They told her, finally, that she was to stay, that they had intended to keep her all along. Rehearsals ran on—costumes to be fitted—photographs—dress rehearsals—an Atlantic City opening. An opening in New York, nerves on edge, girls gigglingly tired, parties and telegrams and flowers for the popular ones

—no attentions at all for Sylvia. Rehearsals every morning—to cut down the show, performances at night and matinee days—a settling down at the theatre, a realization that she really was—really was—a "Fleshpots" show girl after all.

The show was clever and lovely—quite the best of its kind. Sylvia was in eight numbers, wearing eight elaborate costumes which hung, when not in use, from hooks on the dressing-room wall. She dressed in a square room, with seven other show girls and made up at a crude dressing-table, a board with a mirror and a light above it. The eight girls had one dresser between them, an Irish woman who assumed a great intimacy and seemed far better natured than she actually was. The girls tipped her each week and she managed to get them into their costumes each night just in time.

The girls covered their dressing-tables with fancy paper, hung souvenirs and telegrams around their mirrors, kept their shoes under their dressing-table, on the floor. Their street clothes, which hung on hooks during the performances, were the same sort of clothes Sylvia wore, copies of the latest fashions and yet, in some way, just a bit imitative of something they did not quite achieve, though much better than the clothes worn by the average well-dressed woman.

Sylvia liked the girls, even while she was horribly disappointed in them. She had expected young princesses, in their way, from whom she could learn thousands of things. She found, instead, girls like herself, with lovely slender bodies, satin skins, perfect features, hair henna'd or lightened and nearly always artificially curled, and yet girls from the same stratum of life from which she had come.

One of the girls had a family in the lower East Side, though of course she never admitted it. Another had a widowed mother in Harlem and spent Sunday with her, occasionally. The mother took a couple of roomers and was decent and fat and uncorseted. The mother of another girl had been in the

"Fleshpots" herself, years before, and now, her youth gone, with three divorces as evidences of having had a life full, at least, of emotion, had settled down as buyer for a Chicago novelty shop. None of the girls were really better than Sylvia. They had learned a bit more than she had, but she learned from them, now, when no other teacher offered.

Sylvia gave up her boarding-house and with Vanora Carlisle, another show girl and her best friend, took a two-room, bath and kitchenette apartment in West Fifty-eighth Street. A maid came in each morning to get breakfast and straighten up for them. This cost money and their salaries were not the fabulous sums that "Fleshpots" girls are supposed to receive.

They didn't save a cent, either of them, but they lived, comfortably enough. They rose at eleven or twelve and had toast and fruit and coffee and sometimes eggs and bacon, too. This did away with the necessity for luncheon. They bathed and dressed slowly and on days when there were no matinees, went for a stroll down Fifth or a drive in a borrowed automobile, the property of an optimistic admirer, or rode through the park when some male provided horses.

They managed to graft about half of their dinners, which they would eat, of course, only in the best restaurants. When they paid for dinners, themselves, they ate in obscure restaurants in the Fifties or scrambled together a few things in their rooms—the maid washing the dishes the next morning. After the theatre they usually managed some sort of an engagement, a drive to a popular roadhouse, a visit to some of the supposedly exclusive restaurant "clubs" or cabarets near upper Broadway.

Sylvia learned more about men and half fell in love with one or two, though she was not deeply touched by any man she met during that first year. She learned how to flatter, how to get things from them. She learned what a remarkable advantage a "Fleshpots" girl has over the rest of femininity.

Men, she found, desired nothing better than spending money on "Fleshpots" girls. She had heard that before, but she hadn't believed it possible. That first year she was always slightly agasp at the things that really happened. A broker in Wall Street, desiring the affections of Florence Spalding, which he later received, gave a luncheon for ten girls, allowing Florence to choose girls from the "Fleshpots." The luncheon was given in a private dining-room in one of the newest Park Avenue restaurants and it was, of course, beautifully cooked and served. Next to each girl sat a man well known in Wall Street. At each girl's plate, as a souvenir, was a gold mesh bag, sapphire set, worth at least five hundred dollars. There was a little show of affection, of course, at this and similar affairs, but nothing that Sylvia could take offense at, if she wanted to, though she hadn't the slightest intention of doing so, anyhow.

During the first year she was the recipient of perhaps a dozen souvenirs, all of real value, given, as nearly as she could tell, because, as a "Fleshpots" girl, she had attended a luncheon or dinner.

These parties, of course, were all given by men of wealth to which their own men friends were invited. They were usually married men. Their wives and their daughters, in fact, all of their feminine relatives, were excluded from these festivities, though not nearly so much happened as usually went on at the affairs which these same feminine members of the family attended.

Sylvia liked these parties. She liked the men, who were usually around forty or over, because they would discuss things in a grave, sensible way, listening to her theories of life and usually agreeing with her. These men tried to be attentive. They were usually fair dancers, too, and tried to please in their dancing, in ordering dinners, in giving flowers and candy and less conventional presents.

Sylvia had no scruples about taking anything she could get. She preferred candy to flowers because it often took the place of a light lunch. She was

always hard up and yet had to look perfectly groomed. Men never gave you the things you really needed—if they only had . . . the "Fleshpots" girls wouldn't have stooped to accept little necessities, anyhow.

The only other class of men that Sylvia and her friends went with were college boys, in town for week-ends or vacations. These boys were supposed to be the most fun but she soon found out that the girls didn't actually care for them. In the first place, their conversation was really awfully silly. They talked a lot about what they considered new stuff, forever showing shallow knowledge of the world and yet posing as worldly fellows. Even the rich college boys did not like to spend money and when they did spend it made a great show. They were always treating girls as if the girls were puppets on display. They never gave valuable souvenirs. They would go to after-theatre cabarets and try to make a big splash, acting like exhibitors at a dime museum show because they had some well-known girls with them. They would get horribly drunk after a couple of hours and demand quite a good deal of love-making in return for their rather meager entertainment.

There were two reasons why these young fellows were tolerated, Sylvia learned. One was because they really were young—there is a certain thrill in dancing with and being made love to by a chap in his early twenties if you are in your early twenties, yourself. Then, too, they were quite possible matrimonial catches. Older men were usually married, though, occasionally, one of them could be acquired as a husband, if the girl were awfully clever. Usually, though, the city man of past thirty-five who likes "Fleshpots" girls is beyond matrimonial possibilities. He may be valuable, financially, as a friend. He may furnish a car, a riding horse, an apartment. But he won't marry. College boys don't know how to spend money, but, if you work things properly, they will marry. The thing to do, of course, is to get a college boy who

really has money of his own and isn't controlled by mother and father. A college boy couldn't be considered, matrimonially, otherwise.

During her first season, Sylvia learned how valuable an asset being in the "Fleshpots" was, how much it meant to all masculines. She saw three girls acquire apartments and automobiles, three more get valuable financial assistance. There were three marriages to foolish youths, two of which were later dissolved, and one of which was never made public. (Two girls tried to commit suicide, though, both over men, of course. One nearly succeeded.) Three other girls married quite well but went on with their work. Several others, who had already been well established with cars and apartments, changed the giver of their gifts and the maker of their cars, but not their position of affluence. These girls were all attractive, of course, but, without the brand of the "Fleshpots," they could not have done these things on so large a scale.

These things did not disturb Sylvia. She had seen them in a lesser degree in other shows or while she was a model. In the shell of her physical perfection she shuddered a little, but as much in anticipation as in dread. What was going to happen to her?

CHAPTER VII

SYLVIA went on the road with the "Fleshpots" that first year. Some of the best-known girls didn't go and other girls were put in their places. It wasn't like being with a regular road show, of course, because the "Fleshpots" played for months in Boston and Chicago.

In Chicago, Sylvia didn't look up any of her old friends. Clad in a new squirrel coat with a little tight-fitting cap to match, she rode in taxis to avoid the windy, inhospitable streets. In her hotel, still rooming with Vanora, she had breakfast in bed and read the more frivolous magazines. She went to a few parties, but all of the girls agreed that Chicago men were particularly green and stingy. Suppers in private dining-

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In Chicago, Sylvia didn’t look up any of her old friends. Clad in a new squirrel coat with a little tight-fitting cap she rode in taxis to avoid the crowded streets. In her spare time, she read with Vanora, she studied and read the more serious books. She went to a few parties. The girls agreed that they were particularly green when they appeared in private dining-

rooms, a slumming trip or two to slums that had long ceased to be interesting—well, “Fleshpots” girls had a hard time putting up with Chicago hospitality. Then the road—week stands in uninteresting cities.

They played St. Louis. All week Sylvia planned to get on a surface car and ride out past the Finney Avenue flat. She didn't ever get to it. From the sleekness of her life, her grimy and ugly former existence seemed far away. It seemed to her, though, just for a moment, that she hadn't done as much with herself as she had planned. Was this the best she could do? Here she was—still in the chorus, traveling, staying at cheap hotels. Then she thought of that last view of the Finney Avenue flat, with Favie, too large of head, stumbling in uneven circles around the yard and her mood changed.

She went to one party in St. Louis, with just-out-of-college youths whose names had seemed almost magical to her when she lived there. What if one of them asked her to marry him and she settled down in a big stone or yellow brick home of her own and everything she wanted and turned up her nose at the matrons she had seen when she was a model? What of it? What of it? No one in St. Louis even cared if she were alive. Anyhow she hated the town, would be glad to get away. No one asked her to marry him. She made up her mind that next year she'd stay in New York. She wasn't the kind of a girl to go on the road, even with the “Fleshpots.” She'd be one of the girls who never leave New York.

Back in New York, Sylvia and Vanora got another apartment, just like their old one save that the living-room was done in carved oak instead of walnut, that there was a whole book-case full of books—the place belonged to a man who was living abroad—and that the visiting maid was black instead of white.

Vanora went through a strenuous love affair and lost ten pounds and some color, but gained a string of pearls and some indefinite promises. The girls both

got into the “Frivolities Review,” a midnight show which Maximilian Harper owned and which played on the roof of the Cosmopolite. The show was a sort of super-vaudeville. They knew most of the cast, including a dozen “Fleshpots” girls. They worked only from eleven until one at night. They slept more, read a little, grew a bit dissatisfied because they had to work after the theatre and because they had so much time on their hands, grew envious, too, of people who had money and a social position.

The “Fleshpots” went into rehearsal. Sylvia rehearsed without even a thrill. She was tried out with a couple of lines, but her voice did not carry. A tiny bubble of ambition to be a principal burst. It really didn't matter much, anyhow.

An opening, then, with flowers and telegrams for Sylvia, too, this time. She had her pictures in the rotogravure sections of the Sunday papers, “One of the most beautiful members of Harper's ‘Fleshpots’ at the Cosmopolite.”

She made extra money as a model for advertising photography in the interests of a fur house and had her squirrel coat made over and bought a sable throw at wholesale.

She tried out for the motion pictures at a studio on Long Island, but, after an interesting day or two of it, during which time she imagined herself with three Rolls-Royce cars and a dozen servants, she received word she hadn't filmed well.

The company ran off the trial film for her and she had to agree with them. Her mouth wasn't perfect enough, even when made up, for the films. Her nose, small and straight, showed, through the camera, a tiny, but noticeable hump. Her lovely eyes seemed almost too big and staring and her hair, though of course she could wear a wig if that was all that mattered—looked lifeless and dull.

Well, what were the films, anyhow? Money, of course, but such awful people—why, there was scarcely one of the doll-faced stars that didn't have a scan-

dal connected with her—and off stage most of them were frights, poorly groomed and loud and painted. All the men she knew laughed at the films, anyhow. Oh, she might have been starred and made money. Why worry about it? Wasn't she a "Fleshpots" girl, an acclaimed beauty, with practically everything she wanted?

Sometimes she thought so. There were whole weeks when she thought so. She spent money on taxis. She motored with her friends. She rode through the park in a particularly well-fitting new habit. She had her hair permanently waved and was delighted with it. She slept late in the morning and went to grand parties at night. She got clothes at wholesale, discounts on other things, presents, little grafts. She spent hours between numbers, at the theatre, gossiping, "dishing dirt."

She had a few rather warm love affairs, accepted presents when she could get them, but kept her pose of being rather disdainful and cool. She got domestic and bought little things for the apartment, smoking sets, cushions, a table that the owner had neglected to supply. She had a desire for knowledge and employed a French teacher who came to the apartment twice a week and talked to her, Vanora and Eunice Brown, who lived a couple of blocks away and had a car, anyhow, so she didn't mind joining them. Sylvia didn't learn much French, though she thought it nice to know a few phrases and to say she was taking lessons.

Things were nice . . . quite the way she wanted them to be. She had that part of New York which she cared about, clothes, the theatres, restaurants . . . yet . . . did she?

Sometimes, after a party, when she lay in her darkened bedroom and tried to sleep and the sun came into the room when the air disturbed the shades, she thought about things. What did she really have of the best, anyhow? Parties. She was tired of parties. They were good fun, but, after all, you get a headache when you drink too much, get your gowns mussed, get

kissed by strange, unpleasant, too-soft mouths. Presents — what did they amount to?—things you didn't need and had to sell or things you could have got along without, anyhow. Food . . . that second year Sylvia found she had to be careful about food. She was quite apt to put on a superfluous five or ten pounds—and, in the "Fleshpots" where being seen is the most important thing of all, five pounds can do a lot of harm. Her hips and upper arms were filled out a little too much. Her chin was apt to get full, too, and destroy the perfection of her profile and the oval of her face. She had had to cut down on French chocolates. She had even considered wearing corsets. What else was there? What else did she have?

Back in St. Louis she would have thought it wonderful even to have known anyone who wore the clothes she did, crêpe de chine and chiffon underthings, hats that seemed made for her eyes and hair. Yet, what did it matter? Men—oh, she knew all about men. She could have married a few harmless college youths without money. Several older men had offered her apartments or cars. Why was it these offers had come from men she liked least of all, couldn't bear to touch, even? She had a few men friends, but she didn't dare to test their friendship. They were always ready for parties and good times. There were no matrimonial possibilities among them. Matrimony—was that what she wanted? She didn't quite know. Giving up all this. . . .

CHAPTER VIII

SYLVIA had her twenty-fourth birthday just as the "Fleshpots" went on the road. She didn't go with them. She posed for a commercial photographer—her defects didn't show in still—and began to see herself in the backs of magazines, advertising tooth pastes, hair restorers, anti-fats and chocolates. She wondered what she'd look like if she ever did any of the things of which she was supposed to be a shining example.

She went to beauty parlors, now, the

expensive kind, where you go into lovely reception rooms, done by famous decorators and in much better taste than the homes of the patrons. Sylvia had facial massages and packs and went in for expensive creams. Her earnings had been increased, but beauty treatments, expensive perfumes and a few more gowns easily used up the difference. She played in the "Frvolities Revue" and got her picture in the Album of Stage Beauties in one of the popular magazines.

"The Fleshpots" got off the road. There was a renewal of parties, which had slowed down a little. She met new men, liked some of them. Of course she couldn't afford to go with men who didn't spend money.

The new "Fleshpots" rehearsed and opened. Of course she was with it. Things seemed duller than they had been, somehow.

Then Sylvia fell in love. She had had little love-affairs before. This seemed authentic enough. The man was Harold McClelland. His father manufactured toilet articles.

She met Harold at a party and drew his attention to her by pointing out the fact that she had posed for the illustrations used to advertise the McClelland "Beauty in a Night" toilet preparations. McClelland was in his early thirties, a slender, dark fellow with too heavy eyebrows and a nose that was a trifle sharp. Her usual line, the calm, aloof beauty, didn't go so well. At twenty-four her beauty had crystallized a bit. She knew McClelland liked her appearance, so she added all of the tricks she could. Of course she could make him care for her!

McClelland did seem to like her quite a lot. He gave her the usual parties, sent her the usual presents and telegraphed her when he was out of town. If his attentions lacked originality or warmth she didn't notice it. For the first time in her life she knew what it was to feel faint and dizzy when the telephone rang, to listen eagerly to a conversation which, in itself, bored her, to grip her hands together, sometimes, to keep from touching McClelland's hand

or his cheek, when he sat next to her.

To think she'd be such a fool! McClelland's love-making grew to have more definite demands, of course. He didn't care for marriage. Sylvia knew that. Yet she kept on hoping that it was marriage he wanted. Still, what of it—cars and lovely things—and an apartment and servants—that was nice, too—after all—when one is really in love. . . .

The girls teased her about McClelland. They had thought of her as quite icily beyond mere passion. She didn't care what they said. Physical virtue had never been highly esteemed, in the chorus, anyhow. All that she asked was that they keep on teasing her about McClelland so that she could talk about him and hear his name.

One night McClelland told her he had an engagement with one of his mother's friends. She had Vanora make an engagement with two rather young college boys, home on vacation. Anything better than not going out after the show.

They chose rather a gaudy restaurant just off upper Broadway and arrived just after the theatre crowd. They ascended in a little black and gold elevator to a huge dance hall, hung in black velvet on which were fastened stars and moons and butterflies. Sylvia's gown was black and low and sleeveless. She wore orchids which her escort had sent her.

A dance was just over and couples were leaving the polished floor on their way to their tables. Vanora's youth was saying, "I'm sure I reserved a ringside table," to the headwaiter.

Sylvia, looking around, saw McClelland and a little blonde girl making their way to a nearby table. She started to smile and speak when something in McClelland's face stopped her. He looked at her without a sign of recognition, past her then, and went on to his table.

Sylvia, almost dizzy, looked at Vanora. Vanora hadn't noticed the cut.

Sylvia managed to sit down. She danced, she remembered, and ate and drank, even.

"Why, there's McClelland," said Vanora, after the next dance.

"I saw him," said Sylvia, and then, "We've had a quarrel—I'll tell you about it tonight."

"A quarrel with your sweetie?" asked Vanora, forgetting in her curiosity that the only man a girl can be interested in is the man she's with.

"He ain't no sweetie o' mine," said Sylvia, in an affected baby voice, one of her worst poses.

"Who do you mean—the great stone face with little Adrienne Jones?" asked one of the college men.

"The same," agreed Vanora.

"Oh, he's going to marry her," said the other boy. "My brother said so—they say the face paint business ain't what it used to be but the little Jones—there's pure platinum for you. I'd like something better than hair like a feather pillow and a face like hers, if you ask me—but wasn't it money that gilded the lily in the first place?"

"That face needs layers of gilt in it," Vanora said.

Sylvia smiled and talked and danced and ate. She got home, somehow, and into bed and fell asleep, finally.

She woke up the next morning with the shades flapping and the sunlight streaking into the room. Why did she go on such parties? Oh, it wasn't just the party, was it? What was it? McClelland, of course—McClelland, who thought because she was in the "Fleshpots"—and other men were proud to know—to be seen with "Fleshpots" girls. She'd show him. . . .

Sylvia didn't know that when a girl says that she will "show" a man that it's entirely too late for her to do anything at all. She tried to show him. He telephoned her and she wouldn't come to the telephone. He took Vanora to dinner, finally, and told Vanora that Miss Jones was awfully young, a flapper, really, and that her parents and friends had warned her against him because he was wild—he was trying to show her—just for the fun of it, of course—how really conservative he was. . . .

Sylvia listened, quietly, when Vanora

told her the conversation, verbatim, and repeated most of the things two or three times, as girls do when they tell conversations. Sylvia knew that most of the flappers in McClelland's set went on wilder parties than she did—on some of the same parties, in fact—and that if McClelland hadn't been serious with the Jones person. . . .

Oh, well, that was over. She didn't see him again, excepting in a crowd, where she tried cutting him with a great deal of haughty dignity.

So that was love—in New York . . . in her set. Of course. Who could a "Fleshpots" girl get? Really worth while men married in their own circles. Kidnapping college youths seemed the only way to achieve matrimony. You could marry a poor man, of course, but where did "Fleshpots" girls meet poor men—and what would they do with them after they did marry? Marriage, though, that was a way out of things.

If she didn't marry—years and years of living—a few more years in the "Fleshpots"—then a few more as a model or in the cheaper shows—then a saleswoman, perhaps, in an exclusive shop. What else? Oh, being supported by some man you didn't care for—who didn't respect you—even that wouldn't last. What then, either way, even? Years and years stretching out. Girls from nice families married. They were the best—got the best. They were real, had good times, fit in some place. But you couldn't choose coming from a good family. "Fleshpots" girls didn't fit in. In thoughts and clothes and beauty they were above their families, their legitimate friends. What could they do about it?

The "Fleshpots" grew tiresome. Sylvia wondered how she had ever thought the Cosmopolite the best and grandest place in the world. A couple of new girls joined the show and she was aghast at their freshness and their enthusiasm. She came in late a couple of times, missed a number or two. She must be careful—couldn't get fired—without money saved up or anything—she couldn't start going down. . . .

Sylvia met Graham Clark at a party. She always met men at parties, these days. She was rather through with men, since McClelland, but she sat next to him and almost unconsciously went through her little repertoire of tricks. She was interested and gracious and yet aloof. As a matter of fact, she ticketed Clark in her mind as a nice chap and liked him from the first. She was glad when he asked her to have dinner with him the next evening.

Clark was from Millford, Ohio, which he declared "the best and fastest growing little city in America." Sylvia, who had seen towns during her chorus travels, turned up her nose a bit. Besides, hadn't she just finished reading "Main Street"? She told Clark what she thought of small towns.

"You don't understand," he said. "Millford has got everything. Why, we've got a town club, which gives a dance every Saturday night all winter, and a country club with one of the best professional coaches we could get from the East. The girls come up to New York to buy clothes—we get the best shows on the road—even our stores—there are two that have buyers coming to New York two and three times a year—"

Those things didn't make much of an impression on Sylvia the first time she heard them. However, as Clark asked her to have dinner with him every night for a week and took her to parties after the theatre and dwelled, principally, on the glory and beauty of Millford, she grew almost to believe him.

At the Ritz, at dinner, he asked her to marry him. He was good looking. She liked him. He had a home of his own, a car, money. He was an insurance broker and had most of the business of his town. She accepted him almost mechanically. Why not . . . ?

She went back to the theatre after dinner and told the girls. She always remembered that. She arrived rather late and found them already undressed, starting to make up. She took off her plain suit, her correct little hat, handed them, mechanically, to the dresser. She

stood there, slim and straight in soft, orange-colored step-ins—she went in for colored underthings that year.

"Girls," she said, "I'm—I'm going to be married—tomorrow morning."

CHAPTER IX

ALBERTA McCANN pretended to faint, falling off her chair in an attempt at reality.

Aileen Rogers said, "My Gawd, I didn't know the Prince of Wales had got to town."

Eunice Brown said, "Does his wife know about it, old dear?"

Vanora looked worried and said, "Not the rube, Sylvia?"

It was the rube. They gave varied exclamations and varied advice. Some thought Sylvia was throwing her life away if she were really going to give up the stage and going to living in a town named Millford.

"You never can get back in the 'Fleshpots,' you know," they counseled. "If you break your contract Harper will be furious. Anyway, you can't guess how quickly things change. A year or two and you think you're just the same, but God and Gruener and Maximilian know you are ages older. Why, they are always looking for new ones—it's all we can do to stay in, let alone go off on a long vacation."

"There are other shows in town—if I should want them," Sylvia hazarded. They agreed to that, though, for the minute, they didn't seem able to name any.

"You don't mean to pretend that any other show has got the class of 'the Fleshpots,' do you?" they wanted to know.

Sylvia admitted that "the Fleshpots" had all the class there was. She also agreed that if you once left "the Fleshpots" you could never get back again, that even a year out of a girl's life was a good deal, that she didn't know anything about Graham Clark, that he might not be at all what he represented himself to be, that girls were taking awful chances when they got married, anyhow.

But she agreed, too, with the opposition, that marriage was good as an experiment, even if it wasn't a success, that every girl ought to be married once, anyhow, that, if she couldn't get back in the "Fleshpots," a hundred things were open to a pretty girl, but that, like as not, considering the looks of the average girl—no figure nor anything—there was no reason why she couldn't get back into the "Fleshpots," no matter how long she stayed away.

Sylvia gave in her notice that night—decided then, that she didn't even have to work out the two weeks—didn't they have girls trained all ready to step in?

She was married the next day in New Jersey, with Vanora and her latest young man as attendants, spent two dizzy days of shopping, buying some of the things she had wanted for years, new negligees, a tortoise-shell toilet set, new dinner gowns. She hardly came to herself until she was in the compartment in the train, riding toward Millford with her new husband.

After all, why not? She had no fear concerning Clark. He was good looking, in a heavy, square sort of way, with a determined mouth and rather pleasant brown eyes. He was the real thing, she felt, and she thought herself a good judge of men. He had showed her kodak pictures of his home and his business office and his relatives. Anyhow, if she didn't like it, she could always leave him and come back—any day. She wasn't tied to him. It wasn't as if she were dependent, like some girls. She could go on her own again, any time.

At present, it seemed mighty fine not to be on her own. The thought of actually belonging to something—actually being a part of an exclusive set in a small town, seemed rather wonderful. That's what she had wanted all the time—to have something real—that was really the best. Millford was a modern town, not like the places you read about in books. St. Louis hadn't been small and yet how awful it had been. Of course, people with money hadn't disliked St. Louis. That was it. That was it—if you are important any place and

have money. Now she did have money.—money and Millford—a home—a country club—parties—dances—a society set—lots to do—trips to New York every year. . . .

Sylvia had learned that Graham Clark was an only son and that his mother lived with him. His only sister, Lottie, was the wife of Dr. Haskell, one of the town's best physicians.

"Now that I'm married," Graham told her, on the train, "mother will divide her time between Lottie and our house. Lottie's been wanting mother to live with her, but I didn't want to give up my home and mother sort of liked being head of the household in her old home—but now that you'll be here you can do just as you like about things.

Sylvia scarcely glanced at the landscape during the whole trip. Traveling was no treat to her.

They arrived at Millford at four in the afternoon. Clark had wired home the news. His car met them. It was rather dusty and not a new model. It was an open car and Sylvia hated to drive in anything but a limousine. However, this was good to start with. She'd never had any kind of a car before. A negro of rather shabby appearance drove the car. This was Ben, of whom she had heard much, "A great character, that boy, Ben." Mrs. Clark, Senior, had not come to the station as Clark had expected.

The drive to the house rather dismayed Sylvia. Millford seemed distressingly like all of the towns in which she had played. She had expected to see it green and white and shining. Instead, it was rather dusty and gray and shambling. There were a couple of department stores, three stories in height, in the windows of which models wore impossible, beaded dresses. The hats in the millinery shops seemed blurs of wrong colors. There seemed to be innumerable drug stores and feed stores and barber shops and hardware stores that you never saw in New York. There were a couple of motion picture houses, gaudily painted and yet shabby looking, with great colored posters an-

nouncing the treats within. Sylvia didn't care for motion pictures.

The car turned into a tree-lined residence street. The houses were a mixture of the kind she hated, ornate, with too many gables and little, new bungalows, with roofs seemingly too heavy for them. Farther out, the houses were better, with more ground around them.

The car stopped. Home!

"Here we are. I hope you like the house, dear—and everything," Clark said, quite tenderly.

"Oh, yes, indeed," said Sylvia, before she had seen the house, really.

She jumped out of the car—gave a good look at the house. Well, after all—it wasn't—really now—such a bad looking house. It was large and set quite far back in a yard full of trees. It was painted yellow with white trimmings. It was of that period of American architecture when scroll-work was an added elegance and this house had been a leader of its kind. There was a narrow porch running across the front and one side elaborately trimmed with jig-saw work, like a cheap, lace-edged petticoat. There was an overhanging cupola on the second story. It was old but well-kept and decent looking.

"My father had it built when I was a kid," Clark said. "We can do a lot to it, especially inside, if you like."

They went up the uneven walk, up the gray-painted wooden steps into the house. It was dark, inside, with the darkness of last generation's furniture and hangings. There was a musty smell over everything.

In the hall Clark shouted a friendly "Yoo-hoo," and said, "I can't imagine where mother is. I thought, of course—"

The senior Mrs. Clark came down the stairs. She had been crying. Too, she had stayed in her room until she knew the couple had arrived, so as to make a sort of grand entry. Now, she advanced graciously enough toward Sylvia.

"I want to welcome you just as heartily as if the whole thing were not such a surprise," she said.

Sylvia, in her best upper Fifth Avenue

manner, greeted her new mother-in-law. She had been afraid of this meeting. What was there to be afraid of? A little old lady in a tacky black dress with a white collar on it—rather a mean-looking little old lady who'd be catty if she had half a chance.

Sylvia and Clark went up to their room, the front room on the right—the room without the cupola. The furniture was a peculiarly hideous light maple, machine carved. The bed had a high head and foot-board and in one corner stood a wash-stand. Sylvia had lived in worse rooms. After all—if things could be changed, why worry about them? She took off her hat, powdered and rouged, rearranged her hair, inquired concerning the location of the bathroom. It was just down the hall. Of course there was only one. It was painted tan and the fixtures were old-fashioned, painted tin and marble. Well, plumbers existed in Millford, like as not.

At dinner, that evening, Sylvia took a survey of her new family. Her mother-in-law—tight-lipped, small, and yet with a certain humanness in her smile. Her new husband—tall and yet with a stockiness to his figure that made him look shorter. Clark had quite black hair, a black mustache, a ruddy face. His head was a trifle square and so were his shoulders, as if, instead of having been molded, he had been hammered into shape and the hammer-stroke from the top had been a little too heavy. Not bad, though, for a husband.

Sylvia knew then, as she had known from the first that, not only was Clark the best chance she had ever had but the only chance that had offered even a sensible economic solution. She had met more interesting men but they hadn't offered matrimony. The few who had been inclined toward any formal nuptials had been far less possible. Of course Clark thought that she had been besieged with lovers, had had dozens of real opportunities for splendid marriages. What of it? Let him think so.

The dinner was deliciously cooked, comfortably served by a negro woman in

a white apron. They talked comfortably enough, too.

"I've told Sylvia all about Millford—she'll have just as good a time here, on a smaller scale, of course, than she ever had in New York—when she meets the crowd."

"I hope you will like it here, my dear. We are plain people. Yet, I always say, living in a smaller place gives you more opportunity for knowing people—for friendships—"

And Sylvia, "I'm sure I shall like it a lot. Graham has made it so enticing. . . ."

CHAPTER X

THAT night, two young couples came to call. They drove up in a big open car, with many giggles and sentences about, "Didn't know whether you were ready for company, yet," and "Well, Graham, you certainly put things over on us—to think that you—" and "I don't see how you got a show girl to fall for you, Graham—you were a show-girl, weren't you, Mrs. Clark?"

They laughed and giggled over nothing. Half of the jokes were local, so Sylvia didn't get them at all, though she felt she would have been extremely uninterested if she had got them. The women wore cheap summer dresses of the sort Sylvia thought awfully tacky. Their hair and faces seemed unfinished. Sylvia missed the smart Country Club air she had heard so much about from her husband.

Each woman had her own particular affectation. Florence Wilcox, who was going with Ray Jackson, was languid and giggled and opened her eyes slowly at everything. Mrs. Langham—Effie—was giggly, too, but a bit more staccato, with more fluttering of eyes and tossing of head.

Langham and Jackson were far below Clark, just the sort of men Sylvia was not interested in. She had met thousands of them. They were good representatives of small-town business men, smug in their own opinions, careful in their conversations with their wives, a bit more devilish when they were visit-

ing the city, sure of their knowledge and sophistication. They were the sort she had gone with in Chicago and on the road, the kind she had not met while she was with the "Fleshpots."

Sylvia acted quite formal, used her best, almost-English accent. How peculiarly these people acted—as if, by marrying her, Clark had pulled her from the jaws of Hell.

The next day there were eight telephone invitations to teas and dinners and afternoon parties. "We're awfully informal—you must come—and consider this a 'first call'—we're dying to meet Graham's wife. . . ."

Sylvia accepted the invitations. After all—perhaps this was what she wanted. Hadn't she done the best for herself? Hadn't she married a rich man in a small town? She couldn't, even with her beauty, get a rich man in New York. She knew what poverty was. Wasn't this the best thing?

Sylvia and Graham had spent the morning and early afternoon getting settled and answering telephone calls. Graham decided that Sylvia ought to see his office, in the afternoon. Ben, as disreputable looking as ever, drove them in the car and Sylvia had her second view of Broadway, Millford, Ohio. It looked even shabbier. What did that matter? Surely they had staples here—and Graham had told her she could do her shopping in New York, could go whenever she wanted to.

Graham's office was a one-story, red brick building with white trimmings and big glass windows. Sylvia met the office force, a thin, cross-looking stenographer, a young, rather pale file-girl, a bookkeeper named Hedge and a man named Lucas who was indefinitely "in the office."

Sylvia talked, with calm dignity, to all of them. She was perfectly satisfied. All of these people were employed by her husband. Now, they represented her. She was part of all this, of an established position. She had never really been a part of anything—had always been on the fringe of things. The only family life she had known had been

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Sylvia talked, with calm dignity, to all of them. She was perfectly satisfied. All of these people were employed by her husband. Now, they represented her. She was part of all this, of an established position. She had never really been a part of anything—had always been on the fringe of things. The only family life she had known had been

shabby and not especially respectable poverty. Since leaving St. Louis she had never been in a home except infrequently when she went with one of the "Fleshpots" girls to make a duty call on the family she had been glad to escape from. Men and girls she had met at parties had made no attempt to offer her a share in their family life. Now she was a part of a home—one of the best homes in Millford, Ohio. She was the wife of a prominent man, belonged right in the heart of things. Girls from real families—with real backgrounds—they would be quite different from the girls she had really known, strays from uncertain homes, drawn to the "Fleshpots" by conceit or the desire to gain admiration by exhibiting their bodies.

Sylvia and her husband drove out to the Country Club for dinner the second night Sylvia was in Millford. The Country Club didn't look the way she had expected it to look. She had seen clubs around New York, had stopped at elaborate hotels called clubs for meals. She had seen photographs of others. This club was a rambling, one-story building of brown shingles, with an open porch, a big room for dancing and dining—there was no cleared center with ring-side tables. You just moved the tables and chairs after you had finished dinner. Lockers, a kitchen, rather a crude ladies' room, completed the club's fittings. There were tennis courts and a golf course laid out around the club. Sylvia had never had much opportunity for learning either game, but she didn't like to play games much, anyhow.

That night she met more of "the crowd." In the days that followed, others called or insisted that she be a "good fellow" and attend their parties without the necessity of a formal call. There were lots of parties and dances, but they were not exciting. Everyone seemed to be under a sort of false gayety all the time. One or two rounds of poor drinks were served, usually. On Saturday night, a lot of the crowd got "ginny," but this didn't seem to make them a bit more attractive.

The crowd wasn't what Sylvia had expected, though she wouldn't admit to herself how disappointed she was. In New York, she had been definitely young. She wasn't the flapper type, but when asked, she said she was twenty-two and people believed her. She did youthful sorts of things. Men treated her as if she were young. Being in the "Fleshpots" meant being young, too.

In Millford, Sylvia found out, young people meant boys and girls around eighteen. You couldn't really be young and be over twenty-one or two—really twenty-two, that is. After that, or as soon as you married, you stepped, definitely, into the older crowd, into a sort of middle-aged company. You did the same things as the youngsters. You were even allowed a little latitude in some things, but you were definitely marked as no longer young. Graham Clark was perhaps thirty-six. While the younger girls had danced with him and flattered him, for he was a good catch, he belonged to the older crowd. Sylvia didn't like this idea of settling down. She didn't know what to do about it.

Sylvia met her sister-in-law, Mrs. "Dr." Haskell, a few days after she got to Millford. Lottie had waited to see if Sylvia were at all possible before calling. Sylvia had evidently passed the first social hurdle, for on Thursday evening the Haskells called. Sylvia didn't care for the doctor. He was smooth and sleek, with, she knew, "good bedside manners," given to little useless compliments, little needless putterings and attentions, and yet calm, too. Lottie was slender and small, built quite like her mother and yet more alert, almost chirping out words with a sort of bird-like briskness. You almost expected to see her raise her head when she drank. Her hair was sleek and her eyes round and bright.

CHAPTER XI

WITHOUT realizing it, as the days passed, Sylvia, in a way, settled down. She had the comfortable feeling that it

was only a play, if she wanted it to be, that she could pack up her things and leave, any time. Yet, in a way, too, she didn't want to leave. She'd stay a while, enjoy things.

The parties were all alike. You always saw the same people. There was always dancing or bridge. Sylvia had never learned to play bridge, so she spent the bridge evenings conversing with some particularly stupid person who didn't play, either. For years, now, she had been able to pretend interest in conversations while she was thinking of something else, so she didn't mind this much. The dances were copies of what was being danced in New York, with little additional fancy steps. The music was never very good and the men were usually too stiff. Sylvia was an excellent dancer, of course. She knew that the others watched her when she danced and she saw that the steps she introduced became, a bit modified, a part of the dance routine.

The women didn't like Sylvia. She had expected that. She was too aloof, too sleek, too well-groomed. She had married one of their most eligible young men. She had been on the stage. Besides these things, even, women never liked her unless they knew her well. She had belonged to a small group who liked her in Chicago and in the "Fleshpots," and when she was a model, too. These groups, though, had more or less laid down their hands and ceased pretending ignorance of sex tricks. They had helped one another and had been almost masculine in the truthfulness of their discussions. Of course this condition was impossible in Millford. She was married—there was nothing to talk over with women, nothing to confess. She was not in love with her husband, but she was not in love with anyone else. Without confession there is little chance for feminine friendship. Besides, the women were not anxious for friendship—hadn't Sylvia been a New York chorus girl—who married Graham Clark probably the day she met him—you know what those girls are! It took her half a year to establish even

a friendly footing—not as a leader, but merely as someone who was not entirely on the outside.

With her mother-in-law Sylvia made little progress. Mrs. Clark, Senior, preserved an aloof, though pleasant, manner. After all, she had been swept away from her place as mistress of a home. She had had nothing to do but the fun of directing. There were two excellent negro women to do the cooking and the housework, and Ben took care of the yard and the car. Yet Mrs. Clark, Senior, continued living with her son and his new wife and made no mention of going to Lottie's. Sylvia didn't really care. She didn't want to bother about having charge of housekeeping, anyway.

Sylvia's greatest disappointment, however, was in the home life of Millford.

She had expected that people like this—the best people in their way—would be far superior to any she had ever met. She would not have admitted it, but she had intended copying their manners and breeding that had come from several generations of right living.

Instead, Sylvia found that the women of the crowd knew the same things she did, though they didn't know them quite as well. Their table manners weren't always good. Their English was uncertain and they lapsed into strange errors and horrid mispronunciations. They knew far less about music than she did. They read about the same magazines—light fiction—if they read at all, which was not frequent. They knew no more about servants than Sylvia had learned in restaurants and her two-room apartment. They had a smug self-satisfaction and stupidity that was far greater than that possessed by the "Fleshpots" girls, who were always eager for knowledge. They may have had a deeper spiritual life than Sylvia had, but she found no traces of it. Three of the families went to the Catholic Church, which rather put them out of things; in fact, almost loosened them from the crowd and gave a chance for sly jokes when they weren't around. Sylvia didn't notice that these families were any kinder or more Christian in

their daily life. A few others had vague church affiliations, but most of those in her crowd and the crowd younger attended no church at all. Sylvia had never attended church, so this fit in nicely with her habits, though it surprised her. An ivy-covered church, which one attended on Sundays, seemed a part of small-town living, as she pictured it. Those in Millford who did go to church seemed to her the greatest hypocrites of all.

The affairs at the Country Club grew dull. You danced with the same people and they were stupid dancers. They seemed to play the same music over and over again. Cold weather came. The Lotus Club, which was the town club of Millford, housed the local festivities.

Sylvia decided to do her house over, to fix things up a bit. She suggested a trip to New York. Graham advised her to buy her furniture from local merchants—who would order anything she wanted—after all, this was where his money came from—insurance depends on the good-will of the people.

She had planned on New York—on real furniture, genuine antiques, even. Oh, well, buying things might be fun even in Millford.

She looked over the living-room. There was a bay on one side and huge folding doors into the hall. It offered little enough opportunity. She had thought of getting a grand decorator—just off Fifth Avenue. After all, though—with this house—what was the use? She suggested that Clark build. It was an expensive year for building, it seemed. Besides, he pointed out that the house was well-built and strong and in just the right location—the best street in town.

Sylvia visited the two local furniture shops, looked over their terrible array of mission oak and imitation mahogany with black leather cushions. Finally, from catalogues, she ordered gray enamel for the room she and Graham occupied—twin beds, a bed table, a desk, an immense princess dresser. Her mother-in-law preferred her room to be left the way it was, walnut of a particularly un-

pleasant design. For the guest room—Sylvia thought one of the girls might run down from New York—she chose mahogany with a four-poster bed. For both rooms there were flower-designed wall-papers, rag rugs and cretonne hangings. For the living-room she ordered a Chinese rug—which she knew little enough about, anyhow, tan walls, orange draperies in a shade she had liked in a little tea-room in New York, and lamps of orange and tan. There was a bathroom with white tiles and a built-in tub and shower, which Mrs. Clark, Senior, thought unnecessary, and a dining-room in Colonial mahogany with hangings of cretonne.

She knew it was all awfully conventional and "commercial," but she liked it a lot when it was done. The house was painted white with green trimmings; some of the jig-saw trimmings were removed and there was a promise of evergreens in Spring. Sylvia had to admit that Graham was a peach. He had absolutely kept his word to her about things—all but the trip to New York, and she could get his point of view on that. Hadn't he said he'd go with her, just for a pleasure trip, as soon as he had time? Yes, Graham was as good as he could be. She grew quite fond of him.

A few months later, Graham exchanged the open car for a limousine, and, after much pleading, Ben was forced into a plain, dark livery. He rebelled at tan whipcord, with a visored cap, which Sylvia had preferred. Well, anyhow, now the car looked better than any in town—and the house, too. Sylvia had thought that country houses would all be charming, like photographs in *House and Garden*. She found that, outside of one or two attractive places, they were all hideous. Even the homes which were lovely outside were all cluttered up with red mahogany rockers and lace curtains. Well, she had nice things—a house—a new car—a good husband—

Sylvia breathed a sigh of relief. Everything was fine—and she could get away if she wanted to. She was having

a good rest, going to bed early lots of nights, lazing through the days, sleeping late in the mornings—no rehearsals—no stage manager to yell at you—no job to worry about.

CHAPTER XII

MONTHS passed pleasantly. Sylvia knew she wasn't exactly a leader in Millford, but what of it? She felt that they thought she was pretty fine, anyhow. If she hadn't overheard a conversation that wasn't meant for her she might have gone on thinking so. It was during a dance at the Lotus Club. She had gone into the ladies' room. The billiard room opened off that, as did the hall. Both doors were open and over the doorways hung portières.

Sylvia was the only one in the ladies' room, just then. Voices of two couples came to her from the billiard room.

"After all—who is she?—just a chorus girl Graham picked up in New York," one voice said.

Another went on:

"With her airs you'd think she was a queen, at least, the way she carries her head and says 'bean' for 'been.' And all of the new stuff she's bought—and the uniform on their darkey. It's just sickening, I think."

Another feminine voice, then:

"The Clarks don't like it any too well, Mrs. Clark or Lottie. Anyhow, she isn't likely to stick around very long. She's probably missing the bright lights already. You'll see . . . after all, she hasn't anything to hold her here. . . ."

Sylvia went out through the hall door into the ballroom.

So that's what they thought of her! She hadn't made good even here. As for that—what was Millford? She had come here to get away from imitation things, to get into the best, into something real. She had found that Millford was less real than the "Fleshpots," even. It was a stupid little town, aping New York. That's all it was—a stupid little fake. Everybody in it was a fake. She had been so impressed with tales of the old families. Since she had been

here she had found out about old families—about all of them. One old family had an idiot son whom no one ever spoke about. One of the prettiest girls in town had a duplicate—in all but color—and they were both descended from the same white grandfather, a reminder of slave days. Outwardly, each little couple seemed satisfied and happy—and yet, as soon as you looked under the surface. . . . The women weren't frank and open about things like the "Fleshpots" girls. They had dirty little affairs on the side, cheapening themselves and their husbands.

After all, though, as that woman had said—she didn't have anything to hold her here. She had wanted the best. Millford was second-rate. Well, she could get out right away—any time—she didn't have anything to hold her here. . . .

She did have something, though. She was quite sure of it only a week later. She was going to be a mother.

Sylvia resented being in this condition. Her first thought was that she'd go to New York and have an operation. She knew the names of doctors there who did things like that. It would cost a lot, though, and might leave her ill. She didn't have any money, hadn't thought of saving while she might have saved. She hated that sort of thing anyhow. For two months she was horribly nauseated. She was almost grateful to her mother-in-law for leaving her alone most of the time and bringing her cracked ice at intervals.

When the nausea was over, Sylvia still had the feeling that she didn't have to go through with it, that something would happen. She, Sylvia Brennan, couldn't be caught like this—in Millford, Ohio—in an unescapable prison! She had to escape! New York was better than this—New York with its theatres and cabarets—the "Fleshpots" girls, gay over nothing at all, quarreling and yet humming snatches of songs as they quarreled, sleek girls, always beautifully groomed—she had been one of them and here she was—trapped—in Millford, Ohio—and going to have a baby.

Then a biological change took place and Sylvia felt a certain animal content. She went shopping in the two terrible department stores of the town and laughed at the things even while she bought them. Just what was the matter with the things? The buyers went to New York—the dresses were quite like those the magazines were showing—yet there was a difference. The hats were pretty bad. Sylvia had to admit that. And things like earrings and chains—still, she didn't really need any accessories, now. The little beauty parlor a block from Graham's office wasn't so bad, after you'd told the girls what you wanted. They couldn't give permanents and Sylvia's permanent was about out, but they gave nice waves and massages and henna rinses and manicures. Anyhow, she didn't need so much beauty treatment. It was silly, now, in Millford.

The women of the crowd called. They showed a decided friendliness. Sylvia felt that, as long as she had a lot of time on her hands, she might as well learn bridge. Everyone seemed glad enough to teach her. What idle days these women spent . . .! By the time her figure grew too distorted for dancing she was a good bridge player and liked the game, too. For weeks, then, bridge proved an adequate substitute for other entertainment.

She read a little, of course, and dreamed a little—dreams about after the baby arrived, when she would really be free to get away. She wrote letters, too, but it was hard to find anything to write about. She was out of touch with everyone excepting the "Fleshpots" girls. She knew how they hated to write letters—what little time they seemed to have for writing. They wrote scrawls on hotel paper, while waiting for delayed males, when they wrote at all. They told news but sketchily and were not interested in the fact that Sylvia could play bridge and that she expected a baby in June.

In the Spring she took long drives in the new car. In April she and her mother-in-law went to a little place called Mineral Springs, but the crowd

was stupid and her figure had changed so she hated to be stared at.

Back in Millford, women called more frequently. She hadn't been sure which women she had overheard, but that didn't matter now. The women seemed good sorts when you knew them. They talked too much about the affairs they were having, but Sylvia was on the inside now. She heard how Fred rang up Isabel at ten o'clock and how Eddie came home just as he was telephoning, and about Isabel's subsequent actions, the details of Luella Fish and the traveling salesman who told her he was single and really had a wife and three children. Sordid little stories. Of course. Still something to listen to. The women weren't so bad, she found out. After all, what was bad, to a "Fleshpots" girl?

She was sorry they were sly about things, but when your bread and butter depends on being outwardly constant to a boring husband, it's easy enough to pretend constancy. What if Sylvia herself cared for someone—right here in Millford—and didn't want to lose her home. . . . After all, little affairs and a pretended constancy . . . there wasn't much else to do in Millford.

CHAPTER XIII

IN June the baby was born. Sylvia had a pretty hard time of it. The suffering was a thousand times worse than she had imagined, from what other women had told her.

"You'll forget it all the minute it is over and you hold the baby in your arms," that old comforter, had deceived her.

She found she had no grand, uplifted feeling about motherhood. She felt as if she were an animal being tortured to satisfy some family tradition, some unexistent maternal spirit. Why should she suffer like this to bring Graham Clark's baby into the world—she, who didn't even belong in Millford?

She felt better after a few days and peculiarly grateful to everyone. Dr. Haskell and Dr. Minter both seemed more efficient than she had thought they

could be. How good her mother-in-law was, and she had been snooty and superior so often. The nurse was nice, too. All the women she knew sent flowers and little presents for the baby. Oh, well. . . .

She didn't feel any of the maternal instinct she had heard so much about. She had known that was a fake thing, belonging to sentimental women. What a funny little red thing her baby was! She was glad it was well and strong. Of course she was fond of it—in a way—she knew so little about babies. The baby was a boy. Without even talking it over, they named it Graham Clark, 3rd, which sounded grand—Sylvia's husband had been named after his father and called Junior until his father had died.

Sylvia knew nothing about taking care of a baby. A nurse stayed on and Mrs. Clark, who blossomed into rather a beaming grandmother—the Haskells had no children—took care of the boy when the nurse was away. Sylvia, a bit languid, lay on a couch and ate chocolates. Of course she was fatter—weren't women always fatter right after their babies were born? She knew she could reduce by dieting whenever she wanted to.

She had more energy a few months later, but there seemed nothing to do with it. She still heard the gossip of the crowd. She was interested in it. She was part of the crowd. The women even asked her advice about things.

Sylvia started going out again, to Graham's delight. She went to bridge parties. She danced at the Country Club. In September she was on the committee for the annual opening ball at the Lotus Club. She sent to New York for favors and added some tableaux, very faintly reminiscent of Herman Gruener, which she called The Millford Social Whirl. They were a great success. She belonged to both afternoon bridge clubs now—one met on Thursdays, the other on alternate Mondays, and played bridge at night, too. She went to the weekly dance at the club and went motoring a couple of nights a week. Ben rebelled

against his livery and she agreed that it was a bit affected for Millford.

Then, suddenly, without warning and without cause, as nearly as she could find out, Sylvia grew discontented.

The discontent came over her like a great sheet of fire. She couldn't sleep at night on account of it. Here she was—in Millford—buried—her life was going on, month after month, Sylvia Brennan's life—that she had intended getting so much out of—getting the best out of. Millford. New York was going on, flowing on, the center of everything—lights, music, theatres, happiness—without her. She could get away—yes, she *could* get away. The baby didn't even know her, didn't need her at all. She didn't take care of it, anyhow. Her mother-in-law would keep the baby, would be glad enough if she were to get out. Graham was fond of her, of course . . . he'd forget her soon enough. She had to get away!

She told Graham, finally, that she wanted to go to New York for a visit, to get some clothes, to see a few theatres. He was busy, he told her—if she'd wait a few months. . . .

Sylvia was firm. She had to go now—needed a change. It was November. The "Fleshpots" were still in town. She could room with one of the girls. For a few weeks, even. . . . The baby was nearly six months old—his mother and the nurse took wonderful care of him—if Graham didn't mind—

If it would make her happier. . . .

Sylvia told everyone good-bye in an ecstasy of happiness. Of course she wasn't coming back. They needn't know. She'd wait until she got back into the "Fleshpots" or got a job as a model, even—anything so she could live. She could hardly sleep at all, that night on the train.

CHAPTER XIV

It was November and cold. Sylvia didn't have to be careful about money. She drove to the Plaza, her favorite New York hotel. She'd show her old friends who she really was, how well she had

done for herself. She couldn't keep on living at the Plaza, of course, but it would give a good impression while she was finding something to do.

She hadn't written to any of the girls for several months, had heard from only one or two of them since the baby was born. It would be more fun—surprising them, anyhow. She would look up Vanora first, and get the dirt on all of them, have a grand gossip party. She'd take Vanora to dinners, lord it over her a bit.

She couldn't find Vanora's name in the telephone book. She tried her at the old apartment. Of course she had moved. And of course she was still with the "Fleshpots." Sylvia wouldn't go to the Cosmopolite yet. She'd spend a day or two shopping, getting well-groomed looking. She had let herself get run down a bit.

She spent a day in the shops. She found, to her dismay, that she was no longer Sylvia Brennan, of the "Fleshpots"—she was an out-of-town shopper—from Ohio. The saleswomen gave her the usual out-of-town look, showed her, carelessly, the less desirable fashions. Sylvia knew how that was. She hadn't been a model without learning things like that.

She went to the little shop in Fifty-seventh Street. She hadn't intended going there until she had a few clothes and looked better. She'd go there first, she decided, and get a frock or two—at special rates—start to look like a human being. They knew who she was—would be glad to see her. She had kept up with the shop more or less while she was with the "Fleshpots," taken customers there, even. She stepped inside. The decorations were changed. So—she soon found out—was everything else. No—the new management didn't know where the old people had gone—the sale had been almost a year ago. . . . If Mrs.—oh, thank you, Clark—wished to look at gowns they would be glad. . . .

Sylvia got away. She knew that shop had charged three times a decent price and she was sure the new owners had not changed that, at least.

At another shop she knew of, where the styles were good but the prices more reasonable, Sylvia bought a couple of frocks, a dinner gown, a blue serge for street wear. She knew these were being sold to Mrs. Graham Clark of Millford—not to Sylvia Brennan of the "Fleshpots." The styles weren't different. It wasn't that. There is just that difference between gowns, even from the same shop, which gives each gown a complete personality. Too, Sylvia had grown stouter. There was no doubt about that. She could no longer wear model sizes. The fat, too, altered her entire appearance.

She went to her favorite beauty parlor. Was it just a year and a half? Even that had changed. They gave her, immediately, the set patten they reserved for new customers. Her masseuse had left—no one remembered when she had been there. Sylvia had a massage, a shampoo, a manicure and asked about a permanent wave. Another woman and then a masculine hair specialist examined her hair and advised against it. Hadn't her hair been coming out? Sylvia admitted this. She bought several lotions and rubs and was told not to have a permanent for a year and as few waves as possible and not to use quite so much henna. Her hair had never been abundant and bearing a child had not helped it. There were shadows under her eyes, too, and tiny wrinkles at the corners. New creams and eye baths were recommended.

Sylvia left the shop feeling years older. She didn't like that. She used to dash out of this same shop with a feeling of youth and absolute completion—Fifth Avenue incarnate. Now—she was Mrs. Graham Clark, whose hair was too thin for a permanent wave. Perhaps she would look nice, after all, when she got on a new hat and gown—and a new fur coat, too—she was by far the best-looking woman in Millford—a good-looking woman—had been—anyhow—one of the best-looking girls in the "Fleshpots."

She bought four hats. It struck her, as she bought them, that she was pictur-

ing herself in them in Millford, buying them for Millford, in fact—though she wasn't going back there again. She bought a new seal coat, which Graham had been promising her all winter.

That evening, in her new serge gown, the fur coat, the smartest hat of all—a toque of orange velvet—she went to the Cosmopolite just when she knew the girls were coming in for the evening show. There was a new door-man. She expected that, by now. She asked for Vanora Carlisle and was told that Vanora had left the "Fleshpots" three months ago. She asked for Eunice Brown, though she didn't care much for Eunice. Eunice wasn't with the "Fleshpots" this year. Grace Fleming and Alberta McCann were still there. Assured of her authenticity as an old "Fleshpots" girl, the door-man let her in. She rode up the tiny, familiar elevator and with a sort of gasp, burst into the dressing-room.

There were eight girls in the room, in various colored bits of underthings. She had looked like that—just a little over a year ago. Somehow, she wore more sensible things, now, since the baby came. Her skin was different, too. Her limbs were mottled with red. She was fatter—out of shape a bit.

Half of the girls broke into a chorus of—

"Welcome to our city."

"Look who we have with us."

"The village queen has returned to Broadway."

And "How's the girl?"

Sylvia met the new girls. Someone swept a chair clear of silk things and slippers for her. She sat down, loosened her coat at the throat. How familiar it seemed, the smell of powder and grease-paint, the mirrors, the make-up, the costumes on their hooks on the wall. She had given this up—without need—forever—she knew now it was forever. Well—it couldn't have lasted much longer anyhow—new girls, already. Besides, it wasn't as grand as it seemed now—as it had seemed at first—

"What's the good news, old bean?" asked one girl.

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"How's the rural West?" asked another.

Sylvia told them she had a baby. It seemed the biggest piece of news she had, and though they seemed to have heard it, they smiled appreciatively and said "Atta kid" when she showed them a blurred Kodak picture taken when Sonny was four months old. What did these girls know about babies, after all?

There was almost a silence, then. Having a baby doesn't seem such a desirable thing, around the "Fleshpots." Sylvia asked questions about acquaintances. The girls told her. Gossip drifted in. Most of the girls, though, talked with each other, had their own new interests. A year and a half is a long time. . . . Did you know Frances Green threw over Ted and eloped with a chap from Baltimore? Had you heard about Ethel Lemming? And that little Eva Durant, who was with "Come to Papa." . . . Of course you've seen Vanora? Why, she's living with Jerome Forsythe—the Clyde Apartments—you can get her there. . . .

Sylvia stayed, as the girls changed, disappeared for numbers, returned for more changes and gossip. There was talk of parties and dinners. No one suggested that she go—she could have gone, of course. Oh, well, she was out of this. . . . Still, if she could get into the "Fleshpots" again. . . . Looking at the sleek, perfect bodies, the bright eyes, the eager faces of the "Fleshpots" girls she knew that her Cosmopolite days were over. Had just stepping out—a small town for a year and a half—done that? Oh, well, that was settled, anyhow.

CHAPTER XV

THE next day Sylvia telephoned Vanora and asked her for dinner. Vanora made it luncheon instead—was crazy to see her—

They met in the Plaza lobby, went into the dining-room. Vanora had been Sylvia's best friend for several years, and yet now she seemed farther away than any of the other girls. Vanora had

always seemed a bit indistinct, unfathomable, even when they shared the same apartment. Now Vanora, the beautifully groomed, had gone in for clothes just a bit gay, a bit flashy, a trifle nearer Broadway than Fifth Avenue, it seemed. Of course that might have been seeing her through Millford eyes. Yes, Vanora had had a fight with Harper . . . there were long details . . . he hadn't taken her word for things—had got ugly, fired her—she was living with Jerome now—Sylvia knew him—he used to go with that awful Mildred Brookings—big chap with a lot of rough, light hair—a good scout—as soon as he got a divorce from his wife. . . .

Was it only for a year and a half that she had lived in Millford? A small-town squeamishness seemed to take possession of Sylvia. What if Vanora did do this? Other girls . . . still, hearing Vanora talk this way made Sylvia shudder a little. In Millford, if one had affairs—and even then the affairs weren't like this—one kept them under cover. Why, this—Jerome wouldn't get a divorce and he wouldn't marry Vanora if he did. Of course not. Vanora was telling how jealous he was, how he suspected everything she did, how she didn't even dare make a dinner-date without him—“And yet he's a perfect duck—I'm crazy about him. He's going to get me a car for Christmas—and I'm salting away a little, too. I tell you, Sylvia, I don't see how you can waste your life in that dead little town. Here in New York—”

They went to a *matinée* on tickets Vanora grafted. It was a poor show, Sylvia thought. She sort of wished Graham was with her—she had got the habit of going to shows with him and talking them over with him later. After all, Millford got all the good shows as soon as they went on the road and the best pictures—not so bad for a small city—

Vanora left her after tea, promised to “give you a ring” in the morning—was awfully glad Sylvia was in town—

That night Sylvia had dinner alone and then went to the theatre. It wasn't

a lot of fun. She slept late the next morning and had her breakfast in bed—but after all, she had her breakfast in bed in Millford.

The next day she shopped again. Almost as if she had come to some sort of an agreement with herself, she shopped for Millford, a set of Canton china she wanted, some little odd tables to hold ash trays, a long table for back of the davenport—if she didn't go back she needn't bother even if she had ordered these things. She bought some clothes for Sonny, cunning little rompers; things for Mother Clark, for Lottie, for Graham, dozens of things—a work-basket—a filet-trimmed blouse, some vases, a tea set . . . after all—New York shops. . . .

She telephoned Hartley Strong. Hartley had been one of her good friends, a real admirer. He was fifty, a bachelor, fond of “Fleishpots” girls and of spending money on them. Sylvia was afraid that he would be in Europe. She got him on the telephone at his office immediately. Immediately, too, he asked her to have dinner with him that night.

After all—Hartley Strong. He wouldn't marry her—she couldn't marry anyone else anyhow—he was good-looking—the essence of the New York she liked best.

She wore her newest dinner gown that night, her new coat, new slippers. She had had her hair freshly waved, had paid special attention to her make-up.

She greeted him with her usual stately, calm friendliness. He pressed her hand warmly.

“This is good,” he said. “I've thought of you a hundred times, wondered how the farm was treating you—”

“Of course you know it isn't a farm.”

“It's away from New York—isn't everything outside of town a farm? My dear Sylvia—”

They dined at the Colony. It had opened since Sylvia had left town. It made her feel a bit more provincial—she had known so well every restaurant in town. Strong ordered a perfect dinner. It was one of the things he did best.

During dinner his attention wandered to the food and away from Sylvia.

Sylvia realized that she had nothing to say to him. Their little intimate friendship, based on gossip about people they knew, was gone. Sylvia hadn't seen the new shows. She didn't know where people were, what they were doing, what was going on. She was no longer a desirable—a "Fleishpots" girl. She was a married woman from the country starting to plump out a bit who insisted on showing a blurring picture of an indistinguishable infant. They went to the theatre and then for a bit to eat at a new café, but Sylvia felt that Strong was glad enough when the evening was ended. He said:

"You will let me know when you're in town again. Promise me that, Sylvia."

"Of course I will," she said.

She didn't remind him that she was going to be here several more evenings, right now.

For three days, then, she shopped. She wasted time in the stores. She ate luncheons at the most expensive places. She met hardly anyone she knew. No one whispered about her—"There's Sylvia Brennan, in the 'Fleishpots, you know."

After the stores closed she would go to her hotel room and read, eagerly, any letters from Millford. How important the people there seemed and the gossip about them! In the evening she went to the theatre alone, but it wasn't very jolly. There didn't seem to be any place else to go, anything else to do. After all, it was lonely, shopping in New York. Next time she'd wait until Graham could come with her. It's funny how accustomed you can grow to anyone.

Another day of shopping and she was tired out. There was nothing more to

buy. She was tired of the shops, even. No use spending any more money. She got back to her hotel at four. There was a letter from Graham and one from Cleo Anderson, one of her best friends. She read them both eagerly.

Why stay on in New York? She'd write Graham right away. Why write? She could send a telegram—leave in the morning. That would be better. He had said how lonely he was. After all, she ought to get back to Sonny—if anything should happen—such a little baby—

Wasn't it funny—about Graham, about Millford—about everything? She knew Millford for what it was, a stupid place, full of little scandals and gossip and ugliness—with cheap stores and poorly groomed women. She knew New York for what it was, too.

Why, in Millford, she had practically got up the Opening Ball—now they'd asked her to help with the Christmas Ball, too. She'd look at favors before she left, in the morning. She had got a couple of ideas for it, too, from the new "Fleishpots" show. After all, she was somebody in Millford. Hadn't she done pretty well for herself—Graham—the baby—the house—years of comfort and nothing to worry about. She had tried hard, done as much as she could. After all—starting in Finney Avenue. Well, Sonny—her children—would start better than that. She had had things—the "Fleishpots"—marriage—a home. She had wanted the best. Had she had the best? Why should she have had the best, anyhow? Second class—her home and Graham and Sonny? Pretty lucky, that's what she was, considering everything. What was she, anyhow? Second-class. What if she was? What wasn't?

(The End)



The Woman in Hell

By Margit Bethlen

ONCE upon a time there lived a woman. And then she died. When her friends and acquaintances came back from the burial, they decided, with the most surprising unanimity, that the woman was, without the slightest doubt, in hell. And those who had never erred said: "Poor thing!" But those who had sinned, though so long ago that everybody, and they first of all, had forgotten it, spoke: "That's right."

And for once the acquaintances had spoken the truth. The woman really was in hell. First, according to the custom, they had read the story of her life to her. She heard it once more that during her girlhood she had never seen, heard nor met with anything but that which was good, great and noble. Then she married a man she liked and respected, and who adored her.

Notwithstanding all this, she loved another man, and instead of tearing this sinful passion from her heart, she gave way to it, and was unfaithful to her husband. After having listened to the tale, they asked her whether it was the truth. And she bowed her head in reply. Then they asked whether it was just and meet that she should suffer for her sin. And again she bowed her head in silence. So they took her down to hell.

Now, as you know, hell is a place where everybody is punished according

to the way in which they have sinned. The man who in his life has been a cold-hearted usurer freezes forever in the ice-blocks of his own heart. But those who have sinned because their hearts burned with too bright a flame, those same flames will burn and torture them in all eternity.

The woman sat in hell, and in and about her raged with bright, hot flames the memory of her life, of her sin and of her love. They hurt and burned and tortured her, and she found no peace, not by day and not by night. But one day an angel stood before her. Its great, white wings lightened the darkness, it lifted its hand up in blessing and spoke:

"God is great, good and powerful. He has looked into thy heart, and has seen that, though thou hast sinned, thou art not bad. He has allowed me to fetch thee hence, from here where thou sufferest; thou mayest come with me to heaven, where thou shalt forget everything, and be happy and at peace!"

The woman looked up:

"Shall I forget everything? My life my sin, and my love?"

The angel smiled a smile of love.

"God's mercy is infinite! Thou shalt forget everything: thy life, thy sin, and thy love."

And the woman bowed her head and spoke:

"I will remain."



Dinner à Deux

By André Saville

Canapé d'Anchois

"[I]t doesn't seem like eight o'clock, does it?"
"No. It's so light."
"I'll order some ginger-ale."
"Don't make mine too strong this time."
"You have lovely eyes."

Crème Dubarry

"I'll take you to Matinetti's some time."
"Harry Smeltzer said he'd been there."
"It's a new place in the West Fifties."
"Do you know Harry Smeltzer?"
"No. But I love to look at you."

Filet of Sole Monegasque

"Have a little more."
"I'm afraid I'll get ginny."
"Nonsense. It's good stuff."
"So you don't know Harry Smeltzer?"
"No. Your hands are like lilies."

Emince de Volaille

"Have you seen the Follies?"
"Yes. I went with Gertrude Smoll."
"I'll take you again sometime."
"You'd like Gertrude. She's cute."
"You're the cutest thing *I've* seen."

Salade Chiffonnade

"Pass your glass over."
"I mustn't take too much."
"Oh, this isn't strong."
"It tastes good."
"Your lips are like cherries."

Pêche Petit-Duc

"Have a cigarette."
"Oh, I love gold tips."
"Let me light it."
"You're awful good."
"You're awful wonderful."

Fromage Port du Salut

"I'll order some more ginger-ale."
 "Do you think you ought to?"
 "And a little more ice."
 "All right."
 "You look so pretty."

Café Noir

"The stars are all out tonight."
 "Isn't that romantic!"
 "And the air's like wine."
 "I like wine."
 "Let's go for a drive around the Park."
 "Er—yes. Let's."



Wildness

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

LOVE forged for me a golden chain
 To bind my straying feet.
 I dwelt in scented rose-leaf rain
 And found the young years sweet. . . .

But when I hear the wind sweep by
 Or see the white clouds pass—
 The spaces of the open sky—
 Birds soaring o'er the grass—

There is a little place in me
 That cries like any child
 To be as forest things are, free,
 Lonely, and strange and wild!



THERE are two kinds of girls: one who says she will not let you kiss her, and one who won't.



Cold Fish

By Morris Gilbert

I

“OF course they use the same shells time after time,” the Major was saying. “As soon as the first person gets through scooping the stuff out with a fork, the Madame or her daughter—they’d have the old raven waiting on table, too, if they could keep the cat away from it—runs out into the kitchen and dumps some more *poisson froid* into it to wait for the next customer. I only hope they give it a rinse first—I’ve been thinking of carving my initials on one shell and having it kept for me like the shaving mugs in a country barber-shop. But I believe that’s a custom more honored in the breach, at that. The man who owns the cup gets it no doubt, but he has to leave it behind when the shave is over. Some handsome stranger comes along—whisk! out comes the cup—what price fidelity now! The thought opens vistas—quite an Oriental drama might be done on the theme—the virgin shaving-cup—the barber-procurer—the bearded traveler—you follow me?”

“Precisely,” murmured Donald without enthusiasm.

“Unquestionably,” proceeded the Major, his thoughts marching in échelon, “they jam the stuff into the shells with their hands—fingers and thumbs and palms and everything—squush!”

He sighed. “And yet, knowing that, one goes back time after time and brings other people there—just for the childish pleasure of saying ‘See, look at the priceless meal you can get if you know how, and all for three francs fifty.’ Absurd, isn’t it?”

“Yes—absurd,” said Donald. Never in his life had he seen such legs! They were not French legs with feet in little stubby slippers. They looked more like American legs—long legs, Doric—but with a difference. Donald was trying to count how many times he could see them at once. They were under a table, but the blessed mirrors went to the floor. He ticked off four pairs, and he was wondering why, if he moved just a little, they couldn’t be made to multiply themselves into infinity, like the tomato-cans lithographed on labels of cans of tomatoes. . . . Infinity. . . . Donald remembered a class in physics—little steel mirrors, and pins that one pushed around on a piece of paper, and then marked off the reflections with a pencil. Strange, how useful an education may turn out to be. Why hadn’t he applied himself?

“It would be different if one couldn’t afford to pay ten times as much,” the Major went on. “As it is it’s a silly elementary way of gratifying the wish to be considered a man-about-Paris. And if the meal isn’t spiced with ejaculations of wonder and delight at the amazing quality of the dishes, and the charming atmosphere of the place, from the person you’ve brought there, the trip is a complete failure.”

The legs were uncrossing themselves. What a shame! Four pairs in as many mirrors (as well as an infinity of pairs if Donald could only decide just how to move) assumed a demure expression. At that, Donald considered, it was a test. Legs that can be demure and still bewitching are a success anywhere. Legs that must be flaunted—not so

good. The Major was expanding, interminably, his theme.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "and just between you and me—the food isn't so exceptional at all. For the price—possibly, yes. But, as I have said, price is not the criterion, especially when one considers the exchange. And think what you have to put up with—the Madame's unctuous recommendations—they call for a gluttonous and almost morbid enthusiasm in response. It's part of the game—you are established as an old friend, and you have to eat the part. Dirty tablecloths—bent forks—the raven squawking and pecking at you—the supercilious glances of all the other Americans there who are trying as hard as you are to act like the oldest inhabitants of the Isle St. Louis . . . and talking about the Reds in Moscow and the Whites in Worcester, Mass., in the same breath."

The Major leaned forward, ruthlessly blocking the view of one mirror—would that eliminate one-quarter of infinity? Donald wondered, and moved to find out. Infinity eluded him. The Major was almost tearful. Damn these people that take their meals as seriously as the Mass! Donald savagely brooded.

"But the worst thing of all, Donald," complained the Major, "is the wine. Of course you can't expect very much in these places, but no matter how little you expect, you're invariably disappointed. Oh, the sins I have committed against my palate for the sake of atmosphere! A real case of sinful pride, Donald—a just indictment . . .! It actually turns the bread purple if you sop it in it—and that's the only way I can swallow it—blot it up with bread first—and really I think I prefer the bread alone."

"Man cannot live by bread alone," said Donald feebly.

"How?" inquired the Major.

"I said, Man cannot live by bread alone," said Donald, very distinctly.

"Quite right, my lad," replied the Major with approval. "A very unbalanced diet."

II

"BUT you haven't finished your Dubonnet!" the Major cried as Donald darted away from the table some time later.

"Pour it back in the bottle," he answered, more rudely than he meant, and reached the door in a leap.

The legs were transporting a very comely young person up the Boulevard with determination. There was no doubt they meant to take this young person somewhere without any dallying.

Their purpose was fixed, their action resolute. They didn't click with their heels on the pavement, Continental fashion, but they asserted themselves.

The hunt wound its way toward the Place de l'Opéra, pausing at a kiosk, while the lady with Doric legs bought a paper. Donald glanced. It was the Neuve-York Ay-rald. She would be an American, Donald concluded, and pondered stratagems.

In the centre of the Place de l'Opéra she paused. She stepped to a little box where the pad of numbered papers that assign precedence to seats in the motor-buses was fastened, and pulled one off. Donald snatched the next one. They halted, Donald loitering casually in the background. . . . The Despicable Masher, he said to himself, the Flaneur . . .

But there was no doubt she had glanced at him in the café. It was a friendly glance, and it may have been more. Now that Donald had convinced himself she was American he was in a quandary. The situation was a trifle different than he had anticipated. Help me, O Muse, the while . . . thought Donald.

A bus thundered up. It was the wrong one. The little group waiting diminished, but the girl did not board it. All the better, thought Donald—more chance of a neighboring seat.

Luck was with him when the next bus drew alongside the curb. The girl stepped in first; Donald followed. There were several vacant seats in

the first-class compartment. As she mounted, Donald caught another glance from her brown eyes. The glance was still friendly, slightly amused, perhaps

It was an inspired moment for Donald. His mind was working rather actively. To the other passengers in the bus the young American so closely following the girl might logically be her escort. So he reasoned. The next step would be for her to take. At any rate, he spurred his courage and sat down beside her, and spoke in a natural conversational tone.

"As I was telling you," Donald said, "when I got back I found a note from the family saying they were leaving on a tour of the battle-fields. You can imagine how relieved I was that they hadn't waited for me and dragged me off, too. I'd be perspiring in a cemetery now, I suppose, instead of riding comfortably about Paris and talking to you."

III

TELEPHONING in Paris was always a problem with Donald. He could never remember the eighties and nineties in French, and he was sure that as soon as the operator sensed he was not a Frenchman she automatically shut her ears to any comprehension of his words, no matter how distinctly he spoke.

Donald had observed that this was customary with the French, this functional incapacity to understand what he was saying as soon as they got an inkling of a foreign accent. French words that should have been clear even on the lips of a Scandinavian—a race that should be forbidden to speak any language but its own, and that only in the strictest privacy—were invariably thrown off by a Frenchman's ear the instant the Frenchman discovered Donald was an American. It was very exacerbating, and was tied up somehow with an absurd pride of tongue that seemed a national failing.

After several attempts, however, he succeeded in calling *Etoile zéro-sept*

quatre-vingt dix-sept; and the Major answered.

"Al-lo," said the Major, very much in the French style.

"Major," said Donald, "I've got a splitting headache, and I don't believe I'll be fit for our dinner together on the Isle St. Louis tonight. You won't mind if I don't come, will you?"

"My dear boy," cried the Major, "I'm so sorry about your headache! What seems to be the trouble? Let me run round to that decent drug-store and get you some Pluto. I can bring it down to you myself. . . ."

"Oh, no, I wouldn't think of troubling you," Donald broke in hastily. "Don't think of it, Major—really. I—I have some—and, anyway, I don't need it."

"Oh, yes, you do," the Major responded. "You don't know it, but you do! I warned you against drinking that nasty water—you really shouldn't do it, Donald. People die of this Paris water. I'll run right down."

"Major," said Donald, "as a matter of fact, I really haven't got a headache. I happened to drop in at the Express Company on the way home, and I found some mail there that I must answer at once. If I get through with it I'll come to dinner—Madame Le Comte's, isn't it? But don't wait for me after half-past seven."

"You sly devil!" cried the Major. "Why didn't you say so at first? I can understand about mail—"

"I didn't want to worry you, Major," Donald said.

"Quite all right, my boy," the Major said cheerfully, "come if you can. I'll wait till seven-thirty."

They rang off.

Rather dull, the Major, thought Donald. He should know the Express isn't open Sundays—I'll tell him the mail was waiting for me at the hotel—and that he must have misunderstood me, if he speaks about it. . . . But surely he can't expect me to come!

The girl had played up supremely. The triumphant jest between them had kept them in unspoken gaiety through-

out the ride. Donald learned she was not American, to his astonishment. She was French, it seemed, but she spoke English very well, with a quaint use of slang. Now they were going to luncheon together somewhere in the Bois.

The cirrus clouds that Paris keeps for Sunday display threaded the blue sky pastures. Late September was thinning the leaves beyond the Porte Dauphine and one could see couples straying among the trees like fauns in overcoats. Paris relaxes her hold on summer not easily, and the procession of motors through the gates was astonishingly long.

Donald gave his taxi-man no order to stop, and they kept on all the way to St. Cloud. But the Pavillon Bleu looked cold and deserted when they got there—the glass enclosing the verandas gave forth an appearance of ice—and they decided to turn back. When they reached Les Cascades they were hungry.

"It was very spiritual, the way you spoke to me on the bus," Suzanne said with engaging candor. "When I saw you in the café I wondered what you would do about it."

She smiled brightly.

"I bought the Neuv-York Ay-rald just to see what you would do. It is not a diverting paper in itself, but—"

"Do you mean to say you led me on?" inquired Donald, stupidly.

"No," she said. "Certainly not."

Donald was taken a little aback. The wine he was drinking—it was Graves, out of a very icy bottle—lost a little of its savor. Suzanne had ordered it. In fact, she had ordered all the wine. Putting it as a deferring to his American taste, she first commanded Martinis, very dry. Then the Graves, chilled, after deciding against heavy Sauterne. Next would come some Burgundy, not too cold. To conclude, there would be little glasses of Triple Cointreau Sec. They had eaten a hundred and sixty-six different hors d'œuvres to begin with. They were then engaged with a bit of ham mousseline. Mushrooms sous cloche

were in the offing, and they had decided not to decide about salad till later. A sufficient meal.

For Donald unaccountably it didn't taste so good as he had anticipated. A little mirror in his mind suddenly began to display the outline of a leisurely square in Springfield, Mass. A pin, as it were, was sticking up in the middle of the square. On closer scrutiny, the pin became a statue—a straight, uncompromising figure, cloaked. In one hand a staff, in the other a large Book. On the head a wide hat. . . . The Deacon Samuel . . . the Founder. . . . Oh, the long line of Puritans, trailing down, trailing down to this particularly epicurean dingle of the Bois de Boulogne . . . ! Diminishing . . . no doubt diminishing. . . . Diminishing Puritans, thought Donald—what a title . . . !

Suzanne, when Donald looked at her, displayed a hint of depression. He took some wine. In a short time their spirits mounted again.

With the mushrooms Suzanne returned to her original theme. Her mode of thought, Donald suddenly perceived, was typically French—bold, uncompromising, honest.

"You were very brilliant in the bus," she said.

Donald did not deny it.

"It is what I admire, brilliance," she continued. "Brilliance!"

Her eyes were reminiscent.

With quickened senses Donald noted brilliance in her eyes. Then he discovered the regularity and vigorous growth of the lashes. He noted the modulation of her shoulders—exquisite—they broke the heart by being perfect. Donald wondered why poets and writers said no more than they did about shoulders. Painters—they appreciated them—they recognized how important shoulders of women are in making beauty. . . . And then the old, old bitterness fell on him. . . . What to do about beauty when one sees it! What to do about shoulders, for instance? What else is there to do with beauty but to spoil it, he mused—spoil it! That is all one can do! As for shoulders—crush them

into the dirty ground! Scratch them! Break them! Spoil them . . .!

They had had enough without salad—just coffee, and the Triple Cointreau—burning oranges. They were back in the taxicab, which drew up unaccountably at Pre Catelin. It was after four o'clock.

Weeskyscotch. Igh-balls. There was a levity about Donald's fore-arm as he raised his fourth glass. Symptomatic, mused Donald, his mind turned inward. But what fun. Conversation was animated, and Donald and Suzanne were on the best of terms. Again her mind circled back to their encounter in the bus. . . . "Detectives of the Broome street station watched the house day and night for three years, feeling certain the murderer would return. Last night their patience was rewarded. . . ." Thus Donald's mind at the moment she spoke.

"I admire it so much," she was saying. "What you Americans call the 'estuff'—what the Hungarians call 'zal'—the flair, the *élan*. That is all that distinguishes one man from another, or one moment from another. ('The nimble element, the true phlogiston,' Donald quoted to himself.) I am not *intrigué* by anything else—manners, charm, looks—everybody has them more or less. But the estuff! That is original.

"Let me tell you about Fouquier—Fouquier, the Ace, you know."

"I know," said Donald.

"Fouquier was only an aspirant," she continued. "We French don't think only officers can fly—anybody who has the *habiletude* can fly in our army. Fouquier was one of the best—I forget how many Boche planes he brought down—but the medals were lined up and down his chest like step-ladders gone crazy. He was one of the best, Fouquier. After the armistice he was here in Paris. We met one day and he asked me to go flying with him."

She laughed and her eyes sparkled with mischief.

"I went—next day. It was a little 'plane, just big enough for me and him.

We soared very high and then we—well, it seemed we drifted. It was *éqouvan-table*—unique."

She turned radiant eyes on Donald.

"Now, Fouquier," she continued, "was nothing. Peasant probably—from near Marseilles. He spoke like a pig. He had no manners, no looks, no money, no prospects, no—anything. Nothing but a devil of courage—and *habiletude*. What you call the estuff! I shall never forget him."

Donald felt cold—there certainly was a chill in the air. He finished his glass.

"There are as many different kinds of estuff as there are people who have it," Suzanne confided. "You had it in your own way in the bus."

It somehow was poor comfort for Donald. He couldn't understand just why he felt the way he did.

"Do you really think so?" he asked, rather pitifully.

"Si, si!—if I think so!" Suzanne cried. "Would I be here otherwise?"

Donald paid the *addition* and they got into the taxicab. In the middle of the Etoile, Donald kissed Suzanne, without much assurance. She laughed at him a little and held his arm.

IV

"*Espèce d'espèce de crapule!*" cried Suzanne. "*Vieux salop! Rien du tout de razplaf d'la Porte Maillot! Que fais-y? Va-z-y!*"

She slapped the inside of her fore-arm with one palm, making underhand shooing gestures with the other hand. The object of her gesture was a cadaverous man with his hat on who was approaching. Bending over Suzanne, he kissed her lugubriously. Then he assumed an exaggerated tragic pose.

"*Je suis Romaine puisque Horace est Romain,*" he declaimed fervidly in a deep voice.

"*Romaine!*" echoed Suzanne. "*Si, tu l'connais, la salade, et les œufs b-r-r-r-r aussi qu'on t'y jette au front!*"

A shout of merriment went up from the crowd that surrounded them. Donald and Suzanne were sitting on high

stools at the bar at Maxim's. Two or three girls and as many men had gathered round them. Suzanne had developed a freedom and fervor of argot that left Donald far behind. She had almost forgotten her English.

"*Les œufs b-r-r-r-r! Quel menu!*" someone cried.

Suzanne leaned close to Donald.

"It's an actor," she said. "Always a little zigzag. *Very* enchanting."

Amid loud greetings another man joined the group.

"Al-lo, O'Neill," said Suzanne. "*Ça pousse?*"

O'Neill made no answer until he drew a half-eaten piece of chocolate from his pocket.

"*Boulotte ça, ma biche,*" he said and pushed the chocolate between her lips. He was a huge man.

"O'Neill," said Suzanne, throwing away the chocolate. "This is my *bon petit camarade* Donald."

The two men shook hands ceremoniously.

"O'Neill is correspondent for a paper in Neuv-York," Suzanne explained.

Then, turning to O'Neill, she said:

"How do you live without me, O'Neill?"

"*Je meurs,*" said he.

It was a boisterous party. To Donald it seemed that everyone had known everyone else intimately for years—everyone but him, that is. He felt like a Martian. His mind strayed . . . the leisurely square . . . the Deacon Samuel . . . the Ancestors marching down upon him, grim jowled, prim lipped. Lord, what a heritage!

"*Qu'est-ce-que tu a, le cafard?*" Suzanne inquired solicitously.

"Pas doo too," returned Donald a little abruptly.

But he did have the cafard! No mistake about that.

O'Neill drew him to one side.

"Suzanne is superb!" He spoke as if he were confiding a plan of assassination to an unworthy co-plotter.

He drew Donald farther away.

"See that big ham over there—that razplaf, as she calls him?" O'Neill's

burly voice tried to sink. "She made him," he said. "Made him overnight—Took a fancy to him for some reason—blew him a kiss from a loge—critics raved—next day."

O'Neill put a large, hairy hand over his mouth. He talked in "short takes."

"But it was Suzanne—it was she they were really raving about."

He dug Donald in the ribs.

"See?" he whispered vindictively.

"I see!" whispered Donald as gruffly as he could.

O'Neill blanketed Donald's neck with one arm. His breath distilled cognac.

"There was a man—sang 'Louise' in the Opera Comique one night—sang Suzanne instead of Louise. Every time he should have sung the name Louise, I tell you, he sang the name Suzanne—"

He winked seriously at Donald.

"Paris delighted!" he confided with great gravity. He paused in massive thought. Then he squeezed Donald to him again.

"Quite right," he said, and nodded.

"Know the story of Fouquier?" O'Neill breathed.

Donald nodded like the Third Assassin.

"Talk of the city!" O'Neill bellowed in a whisper. "From Puteau to Vincennes! Stupendous!"

He dug Donald in the ribs. His voice sank to a mere thunderclap.

"I taught her English," he said.

He held up two fingers close together.

"For six months we were like that," he said as one disposes of a continent or a century.

O'Neill burst into a roar of laughter.

"I'm a God-awful liar!" he cried.

"God, how I can lie!"

He grew grave once more and again nudged Donald.

"But the Fouquier story is true," he said.

He pinched Donald's arm, and held up the two fingers again.

"And I taught her English," he said, "and we were like that."

"And she is a wonder, by God, anyhow," he said. "She has *the stuff!*"

He guffawed again and spun Donald round with a slap on the back.

"Carry on, son!" he said in a tone of dismissal. At least Donald felt himself dismissed. He was straggling ridiculously around the edge of the crowd.

The stuff! That was it, Donald mused. He subsided against the bar, rather woebegone. Yes, the stuff—and Donald reflected with bitterness that that was what he didn't have. The Stuff! If he had it he would be able to surmount his strangeness in this place—he could carry on. . . . He remembered the grim figure with the staff and the Book. . . .

"*Eh—rouspetteur!*" cried Suzanne, reaching over to tap his arm. Her eyes were shining. "*T'es mechant, escroc! —soit gentil, alors!*"

Donald tried to smile. He looked at his watch. It was seven o'clock. Maybe a breath of fresh air . . .

V

THE Major was doing his utmost to avoid the avid glance of two school-teachers he had befriended a few days before in the Louvre. What was Madame LeComte's coming to, he wondered nervously, and where was Donald?

If there was one thing more detestable than eating with two school-teachers it was eating alone—or was it vice versa? The Major couldn't decide

which it was. Either was decidedly *guigne*.

The door opened and Donald entered.

"Splendid!" cried the Major. "Just in time, Donald! Did you get your letters written?"

Donald's glance was a little dull as he sat down beside the Major. He was a little disheveled.

"O-ho!" cried the Major, inexorably cheerful, "where did you pick up the bundle?"

Donald winked at him slowly but did not answer. The Major tried again.

"Well, old man," he said, "let's get to work—what shall it be? There's *hors-d'œuvres*—the usual widowed sardine in oil, I dare say. There's *soissons* and *haricots verts*, both very superior, Madeleine confesses. There's chicken, and there's Tyrian wine—rather good, that, eh?—not the wine, you know, but the joke—the wine is purple, of course. And last but not least—and I'm told it's exceptionally tasty and well-molded to-night—there's the *poisson froid*, the cold fish! What do you say, Donald, to the cold fish?"

Donald woke up.

"Cold fish?" he murmured. "No, Major, I don't think I care for any, thanks. I don't feel quite equal to it, tonight."

"Just as you say, my lad," replied the Major soothingly. "It's the stuff, though—you ought to try it."

Donald winced.



WHEN a woman makes a man uncomfortable he falls in love with her.
When she makes him comfortable he marries her.



WHAT saves a man is presence of mind. What saves a woman is presence of tongue.



Love Songs of a Great Egoist

By Leonard Hall

I

I PITY my fellow-man.
So few of him
Have held you in their arms.

II

I envy no one in the world
But you.
I envy you the glory
Of having me love you.

III

If you are a good girl
I will let you give me dinner tomorrow,
While I tell you
How wonderful I am.

IV

How silly most men are, beloved!
They stew, and sweat, and swear great oaths
That not a god could keep!
And beseech your favor.
It is given only to me
To love with a sense of humor!

V

Save this manuscript, beloved.
When I am dead
You can point to it proudly, and say
"He loved me!"—
And sell it to a collector
For many dollars.



Répétition Générale

By George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken

§ 1

POLITICAL Card.—This great literary and cultural journal, as everyone knows, is wholly without political purpose or opinion. It is the fixed view of both of its responsible editors, and of all its collaborators and customers who are personally known to them, that the trade of politics, as practised in the Republic, is comparable only to the trade of keeping a 50-cent brothel for sailors of the merchant marine. The lure of public office impinges upon them as feebly as the lure of philoprogenitiveness. They regard the cardinal doctrines of the two great parties as nonsensical, dishonest and obscene. They are against democracy as a matter of conscience, and they live in hope that God will spare them to see the two houses of Congress put to the torch and the great majority of their inmates to the sword.

But this hope, of course, remains feeble: its fulfilment is improbable. Meanwhile, as citizens in sound standing, they retain the right to consult with their fellow-citizens on political matters, and even, perhaps, lay open to the duty of volunteering advice. In the present emergency that advice takes a very simple form. It is to the effect, in brief, that the judicious will do well to keep their eyes upon Senator James A. Reed, of Missouri. Senator Reed's political platform need not be rehearsed in detail: suffice it to say that he is violently and devastatingly against every piece of cant and imbecility that the late Woodrow was in favor of. He is a man who thinks clearly and independently, who states his conclusions wholly without

equivocation, and who puts them into English that is simple, eloquent and in good taste. After the Little Bethel bathos of Wilson and the idiotic chauteauqua rhetoric of Harding it will be a joy to have in the White House a man whose language is dignified and decent. But most of all it will be a joy to have there a man whose language means what it says.

§ 2

Movie Morals.—It is not that the morals of the persons connected with the moving pictures are necessarily lower than those of the persons associated with music, painting or the theatre; it is that, by the nature of the persons connected with the moving pictures, the morals, whatever their feebleness, are inevitably and disgustingly vulgar. The rank and file of the movies comes, in the main, from the gutters—and it is impossible for the gutter to suffer a lapse in morals and be synchronously charming about it. To the immorality of the moving picture world there is, consequently, an air of foul tawdriness, of the cheap-smelling dive, of pig-stye amour. There is in it, from beginning to end, not a trace of the sweeping manner of that of grand opera, not a trace of the gay adventure and spectacularity of that of the stage, not a trace of the wistful charm of that of the atelier. So long as the majority of figures in the field of the movies are recruited from the social and æsthetic slums, so long will the smell of Limehouse cling to the movie's scandals. Only ladies and gentlemen can get away with the thing that is killing the movies in the minds of respectable men, women and children.

§ 3

No. 2,999.—Men grow to love the memory of their first sweethearts. Women grow to hate the memory of their first lovers.

§ 4

No. 3,000.—Do I love you? First tell me the quality of my rival.

§ 5

No. 3,001.—Women, as a general rule, love men as those men are different from the men who love them.

§ 6

The Spirit World.—Although I believe in ghosts no more than I believe in Eamon de Valera, Mrs. Fiske and cures for neuralgia in the eyeball, some of the arguments currently vouchsafed by skeptics against them do not entirely persuade me. One of the favorite of these arguments, the chief in fact, is, for example, that, if spirits really exist and can get into communication with the living, why don't they tell something worth while instead of confining themselves to such obvious pieces of news as: Uncle Henry is very happy in Heaven and Casanova is not among those present. Let us say that the ghost speaking is that of Mr. Sigmund Dusenblatt, late of Dusenblatt, Kraus and Glaubman, Inc., Ladies' Wear, and late husband to Mrs. Amanda Dusenblatt, *née* Piesporter. The erstwhile M. Dusenblatt during his lifetime was assuredly no raconteur, no walking edition of the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Literary Digest*, no fellow of infinite jest, information, and *esprit*. His conversations with the no less estimable Madame Dusenblatt while he was on earth and a patriotic and active citizen of the Republic were certainly nothing to provoke envy in the breast of a Benjamin Disraeli or an Edmund Gosse. They were confined, doubtless, to the perfectly obvious observations of perfectly obvious gentlemen like himself.

Why then, under these circumstances, should it be demanded of the M. Dusenblatt that, dead, he should suddenly become gifted with infinite wisdoms, perspicuities and philosophies that were utterly foreign to him when his soul still reposed in his corporeal body? When alive, the M. Dusenblatt undoubtedly sought to convey an emphatic point to his spouse, to his partners, the talented MM. Kraus and Glaubman, and to his head buyer, the statuesque and capable Miss Sheila O'Rourke, by pounding on a table. When dead, why should not the same M. Dusenblatt pursue the course that he pursued while alive and seek analogously to convey his convictions by a necessarily and inevitably somewhat less obstreperous tapping on a table?

Or take a ghost of fibre different from that of Mr. Dusenblatt. Say the shade of Mr. Herman C. Perkins, the eminent lawyer. Throughout his life, Mr. Perkins confined himself to subtle evasions, to thumping balderdash and to magnificent prevarications. Why then, now that he is dead, should his ghost suddenly turn turtle on him and seek not to evade? Why shouldn't his ghost go on lying and emitting profound nonsense just as Herman himself did while he was still in a state of eating mundane Schweitzer cheese sandwiches and drinking mundane bootleg liquor? If the ghost of Mr. Perkins, appearing in the darkened back parlor of Mme. Flora's flat in West One Hundred and Sixth Street, whispers to his trembling widow that he still loves her, why shouldn't his widow accept it as an unmistakably accurate proof of after-life, since surely Mr. Perkins told her the selfsame thing countless times during his life just after he had returned from important business conferences in Atlantic City with a Follies girl?

Go a step farther. Indeed, go a thousand steps farther. Take the ghost of Napoleon Bonaparte. It is argued by the skeptics that if there really is such a thing as the ghost of Napoleon Bonaparte, that ghost should reasonably be expected to convey more piquant and

important information to an expectant world than confining itself merely to the stereotyped spook intelligence that Little Bright Eyes can hear what it is trying to say, that there must be sympathy in the back parlor if it is to get its message across, and that this flabbergastingly important message (subsequently conveyed in the voice of a tenor with the No. 3 "Irene" company) is as follows: "It is true that I lost the Battle of Waterloo."

Now, what intelligent, logically minded person would reasonably expect the late Napoleon Bonaparte to do anything else? To expect his ghost, after all these years, to turn up in the rear of a two-room, bath and kitchenette apartment in Harlem and confide the inside secrets of his military campaigns to half a dozen former privates in the A.E.F. and their wives is surely to imagine a Napoleon Bonaparte without a sense of humor and deprived of all dignity by the majesty of death. Were he still alive and present in the same company is it conceivable that he would do otherwise than politely confine himself to the same trivialities that the skeptics object to in the case of his ghost? It is not.

The mistake that these skeptics make, it seems to me, lies in assuming that death should completely alter the intrinsic nature of a man, that is, should occultly convert his spirit self into a completely different entity. If I, for instance, should die tomorrow from an overdose of wood alcohol and should turn up as an articulate vapor next Wednesday night in the dining-room of Madame Celeste's flat down in Greenwich Village, what sound reason should there be for expecting me to betray the fact that I have gone to Hell, that there are enough pretty girls down there to give me a very jolly time, and that if I had to live my life over again I should doubtless be just as great a jackass as I had been? Surely the residuum of spurious dignity, of hypocrisy and of talent for posturing that I had carried with me beyond the grave would restrain me from making any such honest and embarrassing admissions. I should certainly slyly content myself and support

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my late self-esteem with much of the hocus-pocus affected by me during my lifetime. I should distract and hornswoggle the assembled intelligentsia with all the familiar and reliable bosh about Wa-Wa, the Indian chief, and the spirit of Julius Cæsar, and should enjoy myself further by tipping the table, striking a tambourine, ringing a bell, and—this most certainly—pinching the leg of the medium. This, after all, is more or less the sort of thing that amused me in life, this is the kind of thing, in the form of literary composition, with which during my life I tormented the yokelry, so why shouldn't I continue to have the same good time now that I was a ghost? Damned if I know.

§ 7

The Superior Romeo.—In nothing is the difference between man and man clearer than in their choice and so-called pursuit of women. The inferior man, it must be obvious, is swayed almost wholly by anatomical and physiological considerations: the gal who fetches him is simply the gal who appeals to him as male most powerfully. The superior fellow is far beyond such Neanderthal influences. He demands a far more complex and subtle charm. In brief, he demands that the gal admire him, and, failing that, that she be actress enough to pretend realistically that she does. Let her achieve this business, and a Pure Love has him by the ear.

§ 8

Rewards.—The Unknown Soldier has his monument. The Unhung Profiteer has his laugh.

§ 9

Notes Upon the High Seas.—The kid who sits in the bucket of tar. . . . The buxoni stewardess who comes in and inquires archly if one rang. . . . The humorous piano-tuner who tuned the grand piano in the music-room in the 15-16ths-tone scale. . . . The electric

fan which, when a stray zephyr blows in through the porthole, makes a noise like a dentist's drill. . . . The alien ship's-printer who, in the daily wireless paper, reports a baseball score of 165 to 3. . . . The free Christian Science literature in the reading-room. . . . The pens in the writing-room. . . . The red-haired girl in the green sweater. . . . The retired bootlegger disguised as a stockbroker. . . . The stockbroker disguised as a United States Senator. . . . The boy who climbs into the lifeboat. . . . The chief steward wearing the No. 18¾ collar. . . . The mysterious pipes that run along the stateroom ceilings. . . . The discovery that one forgot to pack enough undershirts. . . . The night watchman who raps on the door at 3.30 A. M. to deliver a wireless message reading "Sorry missed you. Bon voyage." . . . The bartender who adds a dash of witch-hazel to cocktails. . . . The wilting flowers standing in ice-pitchers and spittoons in the hallways. . . . The fight in the steerage. . . . The old lady who gets stewed and sends for the doctor. . . . The news that the ship is in Long. 43°, 41', 16" W, Lat. 40°, 23', 39" N. . . . The report that the starboard propeller has lost a blade. . . .

§ 10

Logic.—The voice of the people is the voice of God. Therefore, the *Congressional Record* is the Bible.

§ 11

Definitions.—Morality is the ethical system of a man who is afraid to do this or that. Honor is the ethical system of a man who doesn't want to do it.

§ 12

People Real and Imaginary.—When it comes to creating human beings who are salient and memorable a competent novelist has it all over the Lord God Almighty. There has never lived an actual American boy who was half so real

as Huckleberry Finn. Compare Don Quixote to Millard G. Fillmore, or even to Abraham Lincoln. Who are the more real Jews, Potash and Perlmutter or Judah P. Benjamin and Jacob H. Schiff? Shakespeare, in less than 200 words, made Dogberry so vivid that he has remained the archetype of the official numskull ever since; even the bureaucracy at Washington has never given us a more vivid one. Where is there a detective as real as Sherlock Holmes, or an old darkey as real as Uncle Remus, or a soldier as real as Mulvaney, or a Liberal as real as Simple Simon? In every American town there are scores of women who read Rabindranath Tagore, sit on committees to Americanize the local Czecho-Slovaks, collect money to found little theatres, and horrify their husbands with stale stuff out of Freud and Havelock Ellis. But whenever one thinks of such a woman one does not think of a real one: one thinks of Carol Kennicott.

§ 13

Antidote.—I clip the following advertisement coupon from the last issue of *Current Opinion*. I pass it along to all true lovers of unconscious sardonic humor:

Please send me prepaid Dr. Frank Crane's Four-Minute Essays, 10 vols., leather binding. I will either return the books in 10 days or send you \$1 as first payment and \$2 a month for 7 months. If I retain the Essays you are to send me 15 vols. of Shakespeare without additional charge.

Name.

Address.

§ 14

Legal Suggestion.—To get laws enforced simply make it legal for any citizen to execute them.

§ 15

Gamalielize.—To reduce a proposition to terms of such imbecility that it is immediately comprehensible to morons.

(From *Gamaliel*, an American prophet and hepatoscopist.)

§ 16

Hoove.—To offer charity with a string tied to it; to cross-examine a starving man as to his politics.

§ 17

Caveat for the Defense.—In all the immense current discussion of Prohibition the two sides seem to be in agreement upon at least one point, to wit, that the so-called saloon was of the Devil and must not be revived. To this doctrine is usually added a corollary to the effect that alcohol, save in very dilute aqueous solutions, is a dangerous and sinful drug, and should never be put upon open sale again in a moral Republic. On these notions, as I say, all who discuss the painful subject seem to be agreed. I have yet to encounter a public opponent of the blue-nose mania who does not hasten to add virtuously that he abhors the saloon, and that he would be well content if the Methodist bosses of the land let him have light wines and beer, and nothing else.

Either these vociferous dialecticians are hypocrites trying to fool the Prohibitionists with pious protestations, or they have been themselves corrupted by Prohibitionist propaganda. The plain fact is, of course, that the saloon, at its worst, was a great deal better than any of the substitutes that have grown up under Prohibition—nay, that it was a great deal better than the ideal substitutes imagined by the Prohibitionists: for example, the Y. M. C. A. And it must be equally plain that light wines and beer would not always satisfy the yearning of the normal man for alcoholic refreshment—that there are times when his system, if he is sound in body, craves far stronger stuff. To say that such a normal man, at five o'clock in the afternoon, wants to drink a *Humpen* of beer, or that, on a cold winter morning, his inner urge would be met by half a bottle of Pontet Canet

is to say something so absurd that the mere statement of it is sufficient refutation.

The case against the saloon, as it is voiced by both Prohibitionists and anti-Prohibitionists, is chiefly based upon a recollection of what the thing was at its lowest and worst, which is just as sensible as arguing against Christianity on the ground that a certain minority of the rev. clergy are notorious swine. The utterly vicious saloons were always relatively rare, even along the waterfront, and an honest execution of the laws in force before Prohibition would have exterminated them in ten days. Their existence was a proof, not that the saloon itself was inherently evil, but simply that it could be made evil by corrupt politics. To blame it for that fact would be like blaming the Constitution for the fact that Palmer and Burleson violated it.

The normal saloon, I am convinced, was not an evil influence in its vicinage, but a good one. It not only enabled the poor man to effect that occasional escape from wife and children which every man must make if he would remain sane; it also threw him into a society palpably better than that of his home or his workshop, and accustomed him to refinements which unquestionably improved him. The conversation of a precinct leader or of a brewery collector would make but little impression, I daresay, in the Century Club, on the Harvard campus or in the cloakrooms of the United States Senate, but in the average saloon of a poor neighborhood it took on an unmistakable dignity and authority. This collector (or *Todsaufcr*, as he was called) had fresh news; he was a man of comparatively large affairs; he had about him an air of the great world; most important of all, he was professionally communicative and affable. The influence of such a man upon the customers of the place, all of whom were bidden to drink and permitted to converse with him, was necessarily for the good. He was, in every sense comprehensible to them, a better man than they were. He had the use

of more money; he dressed better; he knew more; he couched his ideas in subtler and more graceful terms; he was better bathed and had better table manners. The effect of his visits, though obviously upon a different plane, was comparable to the effect that would have been worked by visits by, say, Bishop Manning or Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler. In his presence discussion took on a higher tone, and he left behind him, in many a simple heart, an inspiration toward nobler things.

But it was not only the *Todsauffer* who was a missionary of light and a pattern of the amenities; so also was the saloon itself. It represented the only concept of beauty and dignity that ever entered into the lives of many of its customers. Surrounded all day by the inconceivable hideousness of the American workshop, and confronted on their return from work by the depressing ugliness of homes outfitted out of department-stores and on the instalment plan, with slatternly women and filthy children as the fauna of the scene, they found themselves, in the saloon, in a markedly superior *milieu*. Here some regard was given to æsthetics. Here was relatively pretentious architecture. Here were polished hardwoods, resplendent mirrors, comfortable chairs, glittering glassware and metals, innumerable small luxuries. Here, above all, was an attempt at genuine cleanliness. The poor saloons of the by-streets were not to be compared, of course, with the superb drinking-rooms of the great hotels, but they were at least much cleaner than any of the homes or factories surrounding them, and they were at least more beautiful than the adjacent livery-stables, cigar-stores, barber-shops and Methodist churches.

Furthermore, they set forth the example of life upon a more urbane and charming scale. Men had to be more polite in saloons than they were at home; if they were not, they ran risks of colliding with the fists of their fellow

patrons and with the bartender's Excaliburs, the bung-starter and ice-pick. The braggart and bully here met his quick doom; the unsocial fellow felt the weight of public disapproval; the ignoramus learned the bitter taste of sniffs and sneers. Life was more spacious spiritually and more luxurious physically. Instead of the nicked chinaware of his home the customer encountered shining glass; instead of spitting out of the window or on the floor he discharged himself into magnificent brass spittoons or into the brook that ran under the bar-rail; instead of the ghastly fried beefsteaks and leathery delicatessen of his wife's cuisine, he ate appetizing herring, delicate *Wienerwürste*, well-devised *Kartoffelsalat*, celery, olives, and even such exotic titbits as *Blutwurst*, *Pumpernickel*, *Bohnensalat* and caviar.

To argue that such luxuries and amenities had no effect is to utter nonsense. I believe fully that the rise of the latter-day saloon (a product of the financing of saloonkeepers by wealthy brewers, so much denounced by superficial sociologists) had a very benign effect upon American manners. It purged the city workmen of their old boorishness and pugnacity; it taught them the difference between mere fodder and civilized food; it shamed them into a certain cleanliness; it gave them some dim comprehension of design and ornamentation. In more than one American city the influence of the saloon is visible today in ecclesiastical architecture, and everywhere it is visible in theatre architecture. I name one thing specifically: the use of polished hardwoods. The first parquetry ever seen in America was in saloons. And so was the first tile-work. And so was the first plate-glass. Where the saloon reached its highest development, there American life became richest and most expansive. The clatter against it is ignorant, unfair, philistine and disingenuous.



“Ain’t We Got Fun”

By Herbert Jones

I

IN his youth De Sponde had found that there was nothing at which to smile.

He tried to be amused by the comic strips in the newspapers, but the effort was forced; there was nothing funny about a woman who continually tried to murder her husband with costly vases, of about a pair of satanic boys who never tired of attempting to murder their parents with dynamite. He tried to laugh at the obscene anecdotes he heard men tell, but he could see the joke of neither childbirth nor streptococci. For a time he tried to smile contemptuously at the gyrations of politicians, reformers, and people who were in earnest about life; and he hated himself for this as much as if he had giggled at the delusions of a maniac. Finally he abandoned his search for the humorous, the witty, and even the happy.

One day he discovered that he was a freak; he was like a hunchback who could be sold to the public as the only and original frog-boy, or an unfortunate woman on whom the public stared eagerly because she was the only and original blue-skinned mystery.

De Sponde was plain George Baxter then, and George Baxter was loafing in a saloon. A bartender, who was also a statesman in the ward, had given his opinion on woman suffrage, and a crowd of harmless voters had guffawed. A middle-aged doctor had recited some of his experiences with female patients, and a crowd of harmless husbands had snickered. A clever Irish teamster told the one about the Jew who. . . . A clever Hebrew salesman told the one about the Dutchman who. . . . “Haw!

Haw! Haw!” Then someone seized Baxter by the shoulder and shouted:

“I’ve been watching you. Good Gawd! Can’t you grin any?”

After five minutes of good-gawding, the excited stranger informed Baxter that, in an odd sense, his face was his fortune; he was a freak.

Baxter placed the card the stranger gave him in his vest pocket and gravely asked the stranger if he had never seen a freak of nature while he stood before his shaving-mirror.

For a moment Baxter thought he had found a really laughable thing in this question; but, before he could cause his facial muscles to twist his mouth into a smile, he decided that his sarcasm was not funny, but extremely sad. He had been sarcastic only because the stranger’s words were insulting; and sensitiveness to insult, Baxter knew, was among the saddest things in a sad world. And, besides, the stranger wore a full beard. So Baxter walked haughtily from the saloon, leaving the stranger muttering:

“Gawd! What I could do with him! He never smiles, he never laughs . . . step right up . . . he never cracks a smile . . . ladies and . . . good Gawd!”

Later Baxter took the stranger’s card from his pocket and read:

“Mammoth Museum of Oddities—Strange and Marvelous People—From All Parts of the Globe—Henry Harris, Prop.”

Wasn’t there something funny about that card? Whimsically amusing, at least? No, Baxter insisted; it was horrible—a man whose business it was to drag monstrosities from their retirement and parade them before morbid hicks

who paid money in order to gloat over Nature's cruelty. Horrible. Ghastly. And how could the wretched monstrosities resign themselves to lives of curiosity-feeding? Ugh. Disgusting.

But in the days that followed Baxter's discovery of his freakishness he began to ask himself, "Why not?" He would never be a success in business; he saw something too tragic in business for success. During the last five years he had sold books in a department store; and, even with a natural fondness for books, his work was misery. Far from wanting to laugh at his customers, he could scarcely hold back his tears when he thought of the books whose sale was the greatest; he wanted to weep for the poor morons who devoured millions of words about a man who loved a woman, but who was infatuated by another man, and he betrayed her, and she had a baby and was going to kill herself, only the man who really and truly loved her showed her the light, and the baby never knew but that he was its pa.

"Why not?" Baxter demanded. All he wanted of life was food and shelter and leisure in which to read. Why not sit all day on a platform and read? Why not? An oil painting is not conscious of staring critics.

Baxter asked himself, "Why not?" for a month; then he answered his question by allowing Henry Harris to name him *De Sponde, The Man Who Never Smiled*, and to offer twenty-five dollars to any man, woman or child who in any way, shape or manner caused, induced or forced De Sponde to smile, laugh or show pleasure.

II

AFTER five years of professional melancholy, De Sponde left the tent of Harris for a more aristocratic position. The owner of a large public dance-hall in a western city saw De Sponde in the Mammoth Museum and good-gawded himself into a dazzling idea.

The dance-hall man had his ideas about ideas. There were hundreds of ideas in the world; and in the city there

were hundreds of halls where men and women gathered to rub against each other to music. Now, when an idea promised to persuade men and women to rub against each other to the rhythm of your music in preference to that of the music of competitors, it was a dazzling idea. Wherefore, because, as the high school teachers tell the boy who can write and the girl who can draw, advertising is the promising field today, Harris lost one of his strange and marvelous people.

All over the western city signs and posters appeared, announcing the new prize feature at Ahrmon's Toddle Palace:

DE SPONDE THE MAN WHO NEVER
SMILED.

COME AND CHEER HIM UP!
YE GIDDY GAZELLES AND GAY GADDERS.
WIN ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS!
NIGHTLY.

PULL YOUR PET JOKES ON DE SPONDE.
DO YOUR STUFF! IF HE DON'T
LAUGH AT YOU MAKE HIM
LAUGH WITH YOU!
JOY IS CONTAGIOUS AT AHRMON'S!
PEPPY PALS JAZZ BAND."

Every night, from eight to one, De Sponde sat in his black-draped throne in the centre of the Toddle Palace floor and scowled. When he worked for Harris he had never scowled. But in the Palace he could not read. His only diversion was watching the squirming couples and repressing a desire to choke the feeble-minded flappers who glided by, winking and gawking and calling, "Toodle Doo."

The Palace was hot and airless; it was filled with the odors of cheap perfume, cigarette smoke, and of jazzhounds and jazzbabies. The crazy racket of the band gave De Sponde a headache every night; and, when he watched the musicians, he felt an impulse to shriek.

On the platform there was a leg that never stopped wiggling; and associated with the wiggling leg was a banjo, punk-

ing and panking; and hovering over the banjo was a white face which gazed lovingly at the wiggling leg.

On the platform there was a young man who committed murder, adultery, and blasphemy with a piano and pounded a piano stool with his bouncing thighs.

On the platform there was an Italian youth who embraced a violin with an almost sexual affection and drew more than sexual sighs from its strings.

On the platform there was an Orgy, disguised in evening clothes to look like a man and surrounded by drums, bells, and children's noise-making toys. The Orgy wriggled in its chair and shouted, "Ah-h-h daddy . . . honey . . . sweet cooky . . . hot daddy. . . ."

About this Orgy De Sponde thought:

"In a minute he will leap from the platform and grab one of these girls. He will leap, and he will kiss her on the mouth, and he will kiss her on the neck, and he will pant, 'Ah, daddy,' and he will tear down her hair. In a minute he will squirm off the platform and—oh, damn his wriggling."

And the Orgy would show its originality by playing on a saw with a violin bow.

On the platform there was a saxophone, and behind the saxophone there was a wind with two legs.

On the platform there was noise mixed up with squirming bodies; the noise made De Sponde's head ache, and the bodies drove him mad.

Every night Ahrmon's Pageant of Pleasure and Parade of Pure Joy slid by De Sponde and tried to win a hundred dollars. There were the dozens of toodle-doo mirth-provokers. And there were the bolder women who petted De Sponde's hand and whimpered, "Aw, tum on, tootsie-ootsie, div us a itta-witta smile—aw, woncha? Tum on; baby needs a new pair of shoesie-oosies. Aw-wite for you-woo."

Then there were the men who could wiggle their ears; the phenomena who could cross their eyes; and, most astounding of all, the chaps who, by some mysterious trick, could look foolish. Most of the men were methodical

—De Sponde saw the trait of business in them. They sat on the arm of the black throne and told jokes. Mothers-in-law predominated among the decent jokes; newly married couples were most numerous among—were most numerous. The nigger whose wife took in washing came by every night, and his religious brother who stole chickens was almost as frequent in his visits. Pat and Mike; Abey and Ikey; the Englishman, the Irishman, and the Scotchman, and the Dago who just came over were present in full strength. Prohibition was a great favorite.

Some of the jazzfolk tried to be original. One boy jerked away from his partner and tumbled to the floor; but De Sponde only wondered vaguely if the fall injured the boy and if the boy really needed money. A gaunt Scandinavian sauntered up with a womanish walk and lisped, "Now, if you don't thmile, I'll thlap you on the wrist; tho there." The most original joker was the woman who whispered to De Sponde that she needed a hundred dollars for gambling debts, and her husband was out of town for a week, if De Sponde got her meaning. The Man Who Never Smiled mumbled something in her ear, and the woman ran insanely from the hall.

III

AFTER a few months at the Palace, De Sponde began to hate his life. He wanted to leave the dance-hall, but he was afraid. He was afraid to go back into business. There was a haunting fear in his mind that he had become too freakish for conventional business; sometimes he thought he was tattooed and covered with tiger skins, and weighed six hundred pounds, and was eight feet tall and ten inches around the waist, and had snakes coiled about his neck. He was a freak. Men would say: "Ladies and gentlemen, step right up close and purchase a dictionary from the side-show of this department store."

He was afraid to return to the circus; he was afraid of Henry Harris, who had behaved like a sullen idiot when

ing and panking; and hovering over the banjo was a white face which gazed lovingly at the wiggling leg.

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AFTER a few months at the Palace, De Sponde began to hate his life. He wanted to leave the dance-hall, but he was afraid. He was afraid to go back into business. There was a haunting fear in his mind that he had become too skish for conventional business; sometimes he thought he was tattooed with tiger skins, and weighed pounds, and was inches around the coiled about his. Men would lemen, step right a dictionary from epartment store." turn to the circus; enry Harris, who sullen idiot when

De Sponde left him and had sworn to ruin the sad man's career. De Sponde cringed from the thought of scowling at dancing half-wits all his life; but he had grown afraid of ordinary occupation. George Baxter had died, he said.

One morning De Sponde was going to his rooms; he rode a sleepy night street-car. A jazzhound and a jazzbaby were going home, too; they sat in front of De Sponde without noticing him. They were sleepy, but not from dancing; they had been born sleepy, and nothing had ever been able to arouse them. The man was a moron who worked in offices—here and there. The girl was a moron who was a typist. She worked here and there, too, because she could not remember telephone numbers and she tried to force herself upon her employers. She was constantly showing her ankles—accidentally—and waiting for her bosses to start something. But her bosses were too busy and grew sick of her and discharged her; anyway, her ankles were thick.

These were two of the morons who had tried to make De Sponde happy enough to laugh. They went to the Palace three nights a week and rubbed against each other to music because they could do that in their sleep; but this excitement had lost its thrill, and pretty soon they would be married—if they could win the money. But De Sponde thought they were the unhappiest, most tired children in the world; he had not the heart to laugh at them, for they had been born sleepy.

"Can you beat this here De Sponde?" asked the jazzhound. The jazzbaby could not beat De Sponde.

"He must be paralyzed in the face, the poor fish," was the jazzhound's opinion. By coincidence, this was, also, the opinion of the jazzbaby; but she wavered between paralysis and a cracked lip. The case of De Sponde was difficult to diagnose.

"Well, anyway," declared the hound, "we had a good time."

The baby smiled a sleepy smile.

"The music was swell," she sighed.

The jazzbaby and the jazzhound dis-

cussed music; they talked about good times; they grew sentimental over contentment. The hound tightened his hold on the baby's shoulder.

"You happy, honey?" The hound's voice was confident.

"Bet I am, honey." Happiness was not a thing for which the sleepy voice awoke; happiness could be talked of in one's sleep."

"I'm the happiest guy in town then," announced the hound.

"I'm the happiest girl in the world," the sleepy voice yawned.

De Spone listened dully to the conversation.

Happy? Happy! Happy to rub against each other to music. Happiness was no secret, after all; happiness was simply the state in which one perspired cheap perfume in a room that was not ventilated. Nothing more simple; happiness was only the excitement caused by a noise which one's legs and torso heard. Happiness was sweet cooky; ah, daddy was happiness.

De Sponde leaned slightly forward in order to hear the drowsy philosophy of a jazzhound and a jazzbaby:

"The music was—I'm so happy. . . ."

Secretly the jazzhound and jazzbaby were beginning to be extremely bored with embracing to music at Ahrmon's. Even while they were blubbering, "Happy, happy," they were confusedly considering the fuller possibilities of life. But their thoughts went circling around a flower and always came back to the same place. The jazzbaby thought: "I might be wild and all that—but my virtue." The jazzhound thought: "I ain't no saint—but her virtue." And the flower blossomed greater and greater and spread out long tendrils which reached closer and closer to the circle in which the thoughts of the jazzhound and jazzbaby traveled. Long, strong tendrils, stretching, stretching, stretching.

But salvation scampered up on time, and the jazzbaby and the jazzhound did not have to sacrifice honor and chastity. They were married and dispensed with the music and, later, became bored again. They were married and started house-

keeping in two rooms with a hundred dollars. De Sponde had crammed the money into the jazzhound's hand. Then he dashed from the street-car, laughing so loudly that people turned in their seats and stared after him.

IV

GEORGE BAXTER sells books now. George Baxter had to return to life in order to earn food for a body he had once occupied. Ahrmon lost two hundred dollars in the two nights following the morning the jazzhound proposed to the jazzbaby, and he abandoned his dazzling idea.

De Sponde was sorry for his employer, but he was powerless to support the dazzling idea. He watched the dancing crowd with his usual scowling face, but a soliloquy scratched mad sentences across his brain.

"That half-wit there . . ." thought De Sponde. "The dull look of hate in his eyes. . . . The sneer on his lips. . . . He is planning to choke his girl to death, and he is squeezing her now to show her how it will feel. Look at the agony in her face. She looks up at the half-wit and pleads. See that crazy girl in the green dress. Look at her face. What does it say? The girl is cursing the man with her; she says, 'Damn you; damn, damn, damn you. You hurt me. And your paw is bruising my back. Let me be free; I want to dance alone.' The tall, blond man in brown, smiling cynically at his partner. He is promising to shoot her to-night. He wants to smile cynically at her dead

body because she winked at another man. The poor girl; she is dancing frantically, trying to win life. Now I know: he is going to shoot the woman because she does not shiver with sufficient ecstasy when the drummer yells, 'Ah, daddy.' There is the woman who told me an indecent story last week. She has her arm around the neck of a ten-year-old boy who has voted twice for President. Her arm tells the boy that the woman should be his wife. The woman is gloating; she wants to marry the boy and kill him with a slow poison of lust and stupidity—not for insurance, but just because it gives her pleasure to kill things with that slow poison. And the boy thinks that some day he will marry this arm. God, look at the red-haired harlot with the crucifix on her chest."

The hysterical thoughts smeared themselves in columns before the mental eye of De Sponde. Then suddenly a sane thought would flash into consciousness, like an obliterating pencil stroke:

"You're all wrong, De Sponde. These people are all alike; they are like a little girl's cut-out dolls. They are all alike, and they are all like that girl in blue with the terror-stricken eyes. She looks like Fear gauded up for Sunday School, but this very minute she is saying—" (and the girl who happened to wink at De Sponde as the thought entered his mind would see the grin and hear the first noises of a great chuckle and would claim the prize) "that frightened girl is saying, '*Ain't we got fun*' . . . happy . . . happy . . ."



THE epilogue to a girl's seeking adventure is her seeking advice.



Let The Law Take Its Course

By John Torcross

CHARACTERS

ABIE GILTBERG (a revenue officer)
MIKE CONNORS (ditto)
A HEADWAITER
A WAITER

*Scene: a New York restaurant.
Time: 8 P. M.*

(ABIE and MIKE have just seated themselves at a table in the corner)

HEADWAITER

Good evening, gentlemen. A little dinner? The breast of guinea hen is very fine.

ABIE (*whispering*)

Nothing to eat. Just a coupla Scotch highballs.

HEADWAITER

Certainly. At once, sir.

MIKE

Have a cigar, Abe.

ABIE

Thanks. What you been up to lately?

MIKE

Nothin' much. Haven't been on a real good souse for almost three days.

ABIE

You don't mean it!

MIKE

Sure I do. Spent Tuesday at Pat Gilligan's. Great Scotch at Gilligan's. Almost as good as that stuff we got at Hickey's.

ABIE

I was around at Hickey's the other day. He's got a new stock of gin that's so smooth like velvet.

MIKE

Glad you told me. I need some good gin.

ABIE

What's this I hear about the Dutchman closin'?

MIKE

Aw, that's a lot of bunk! He only shut down for a couple of nights. I was in there Monday and it was goin' strong.

(Enter WAITER with drinks which he places on table)

ABIE

Well, here's lookin'. Too bad Clan-
cey's moved so far uptown. Use to be damn handy.

MIKE (*taking long swig*)

Whew! Say, waiter, what you tryin' to do? Poison us? This ain't what we had last time. We ordered whiskey, not varnish.

WAITER

Yes, sir. I'll get you the best, sir.

ABIE

Make it fast, too.

MIKE

Clancey's ain't what it was in the old days. Got some rye there last week I could hardly get down.

ABIE

Best rye in town is Winkle's. Worked up the swellest jag there you ever saw the other night. Just on rye straight.

MIKE

Have you tried Fritz Klauber's ale? It's immense. Fritz pretends he's running a delicatessen store.

ABIE

Went around there th' other day. Wanted some schnapps, but Fritz he was all outa it. Say, have you had any of that there red ink at Rossini's?

MIKE

Naw, but Giosuppi has some that'll start you steppin' after a couple of glasses.

(WAITER returns with two full glasses)

WAITER

Yes, sir. Here's the real stuff.

ABIE

Happy days, Mike!

MIKE

Lookin'!

ABIE

Sold a coupla cases of "White Horse" last week. Some of the stuff we nabbed that night at the "Go Easy Club."

MIKE

Do you know anybody who wants some Pommery? I'll let 'em have it cheap. Got a stack of it th' other day in a clean-up in West Forty-seventh.

ABIE

Think I got a cash customer for you. Just sold him some vermouth myself.

MIKE

I got some Burgundy, too.

ABIE

Waiter! 'nother whiskey.

MIKE

Same here.

WAITER

Yes, sir.

ABIE

I tell you, Mike. We might try Schlegel's on Thirty-first Street.

MIKE

We'll give it the once-over after this dump.

ABIE

His brandy's got a real kick.

MIKE

And I like his applejack.

(WAITER arrives with drinks)

WAITER

Here you are, sir.

ABIE

Wish we had more roadhouse work. Good stuff in them roadhouses.

MIKE

Stuff's all ri' here. Bottoms up, Abe.

ABIE

(Following the other's example)
Bomsup.

MIKE

Great li'l burg, New York. Get's better ev' year.

ABIE

Bes' place there is. Waiter! Two more same.

WAITER

Yes, sir.

MIKE

Have 'nother cigar, Abie.

ABIE

Don'-mind-if-I-do.

MIKE

More liquor on market than ev' before.

<p>ABIE Tha' so, Mike.</p> <p>MIKE Goo' liquor, too.</p> <p>ABIE Ev'where you go. (WAITER <i>returns with drinks. Places them on table</i>)</p> <p>MIKE and ABIE (<i>drinking</i>) Here's to Pro'bition!</p> <p>MIKE Say, Abe. Time we dusted. What d'you say?</p> <p>ABIE You're ri', Mike. You're absolu' ri'. (To WAITER) Hey, you! Get head-waiter.</p> <p>WAITER At once, sir.</p> <p>MIKE (<i>raising glass</i>) Here's th' hair off your head.</p>	<p>ABIE Goo' luck. (<i>Enter Headwaiter</i>)</p> <p>HEADWAITER Is there anything you wish, sir?</p> <p>ABIE (<i>staggering to his feet</i>) You're 'rested. You're 'rested for sellin' liquor!</p> <p>HEADWAITER Why—I—er—</p> <p>MIKE None o' that. You're 'rested. Come 'long with us.</p> <p>HEADWAITER But—er—it's—ah—</p> <p>ABIE Call man'ger of 'stablishment. He's 'rested, too. You're <i>all</i> 'rested.</p> <p>MIKE All 'rested. Place pinched. Sellin' liquor 'gainst law!</p>
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Autumnal

By David Morton

I SHALL came home under the autumn stars,
And entering in across the lighted sill,
Be glad of red coals glowing through the bars,
To warm my hands . . . and this strange inner chill.
For I have walked old, lonely roads today,
Where thin and yellow sunlight seemed afloat
With mist and wood-smoke that have still their way
Of drawing something tight about the throat.

I shall feel safer when I close the door
Against the dark's vague tugging griefs and fears. . . .
For there, where firelight falls across the floor,
Will be a sense of gray, assembled years—
Old friends and wise with whom I learned to make
A way of smiling, when the heart would break.

The Last Class

By Paul Tanaquil

I

THE position that Maurice occupied at the University was equivocal. In age he was a shade older than the average undergraduate and considerably younger than his fellows on the faculty. Any fraternization with either group offered certain difficulties and incongruities. Moreover, his dual role of student on the one hand and teacher on the other left him but scant leisure to pursue what acquaintanceship he might desire to ripen into friendship. So, as ever, he found himself neither fish nor fowl.

At first he had hoped to be able to accomplish much.

Surely, his very youth would make it possible for him to mean something to the students whom he must teach? What was difficult to accept from a superannuated pedagogue might be more welcome from one like themselves, who was willing and capable in the matter of comprehending, almost of sharing, their point of view. He wanted, above all, to be one with them, to share their pain and pleasures, to know what doubts they weighed. And he flattered himself to the extent of hoping that he might stimulate their curiosity, encourage them to use their minds and develop them by delving here and there, anywhere, in the rich store of knowledge and experience which otherwise they might miss.

There was no hint of patronage in his attitude. He realized that he himself had been particularly fortunate in his European paternity and education; he was grateful for the casual allusions dropped by masters of every sort in

England, in Paris and in America, which had brought him into contact with minds more vital and alert—and certainly more sympathetic—than those paraded in curricular subjects. He wished now to do much the same thing. It was his job, of course, to teach the rudiments of the French language, but incidentally he might easily intersperse anecdotes and references that should quicken, within these students of his, a desire to avail themselves of the abundant riches of the literature. Some of them, naturally, would never continue the study; but even if they abandoned it, would they not have gained something by merely having read, in English, *Candide* or Montaigne's *Essais*? And if, later, those who continued were to be dulled and staled by exaggerated insistence upon academic trivialities, nothing could change the fact that to himself would be due the first flush of pleasure at the discovery of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, the first poignant heart-beat in unison with Baudelaire.

That in itself was something which no solemn pundit could ever rob from him. The means he might employ were negligible. Voltaire supplied innumerable yarns he might retail to amuse them; Montaigne's splendid selfishness might pique them; surely Aucassin's glee for Hell or the dusky virago of him of *Les Fleurs du Mal* might stir them. Professional ethics were usually rot, professorial ones especially. *Avanti!*

Again, the sex element of co-education was, so far as he was concerned, of no matter. The more ardent he might be intellectually, the less liable he would be to the attraction of personalities. A polite frigidity might be assumed with

most success by a nature actually contrary; he knew that from one or two experiences of his own, experiences which none of his students could be expected to have duplicated.

"Professor," asked a flapper, "won't you please tell me what is the matter? I try my hardest and I find I am getting nowhere."

She was very pretty as the light played under the wide brim of her gay-flowered hat and accentuated the blue innocence of her large eyes; the blonde bobbed hair that shook as she moved her head, and the esoteric worldliness of her rouged lips were potently alluring. Somehow he found himself wanting to take her in his arms. But it was very simple to frown as he looked at the floor under him and then to glare at her.

"If you would only try, Miss Danvers, to use your head in this course instead of your eyes. . . ."

To the victor belongs the spoils. He turned to a bespectacled intellectual and urged her to tackle Rémy de Gourmont.

And he told himself he was amply satisfied.

II

To handle these people, he mused, one must know one's self. Thoroughly. One must go back in one's mind over all the factors that have contributed to the moulding of one's mind, one must take them into consideration, and out of them one must formulate certain qualities that may prove advantageous. As for the rest, the mass of preconception and prejudice must be discarded. Over and above the mechanics of teaching there was something of great significance; one must unlearn so much in order to teach so little.

Furthermore, it should not be done pedagogically. After all, his life had been too varied for him ever to pigeon-hole it as the learned scholars pigeon-holed their literary heroes.

He looked back over the cardinal incidents of his life. His father's father, Edouard Delaquerrière, Professor of French Literature at the Polytechnic

School in Dresden and tutor to the children of the King of Saxony. Of the latter, one had gone mad and the other had blown his brains out over a scandal in connection with the daughter of *Hofkutscher*. His father's mother: Charleston, South Carolina. Her brother a general in the Confederate Army and all that sort of thing. His mother's father: Irish-American, with an ancestor supposed to have signed the Declaration of Independence. He owned half of New York at one time, but drank like a fish and ended his life in a sordid affair with a dancer. His mother's mother: died early of a broken heart and tubercular lungs.

Now, for Maurice himself. Born in Carlsbad, where his father practised medicine. French from his father, English from his mother, German of a sort from servants and in shops, Italian while learning how to fence. Somehow or other he had been christened and baptised, but he did not remember ever having gone to church until he was at least eight. Once he had gone to the newly organized Sunday-school class, held Friday afternoon in the furnished room of the minister sent by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" to be chaplain of the English Church in Carlsbad. The minister's wife, Mrs. Reynolds, was possessed of a cheerful Christian helpfulness, an insistent voice, a wen on the left side of her nose and a flat chest. Maurice had sung "*Ten-fel*" for "*Joyful*" and refused to believe the authenticity of the Immaculate Conception. He was a doctor's son and must have proofs. The Sunday-school class was abandoned.

Carlsbad to him, from infancy, meant people. First, his father, who had annihilated fairies, Santa Claus, Roman Catholicism and the imagined omnipotence of the richly uniformed *Polizei*, and had substituted for them a love of Socrates, Japan, metabolic research and Viennese operettes. Next, patients, people who went to have their innards renovated and who came smiling out of the office. They would take him for a walk to the Sprudel or through the

forest over the hill to breakfast at the Kaiserpark. Clementelle, the fearless journalist, who brought *dragés* from Paris, and in whose face it was fun to throw papers; Floyd Ritch, who took one on his knees, praising one's vivid imagination, which, whenever thereafter narrated, assumed a solemnity and became a family by-word.

"That boy," the dramatist had said with tears in his eyes, "that boy was born to be an actor!"—so, in Mrs. Delaquerrière's mind the story had been metamorphosed.

Then there was John B. O'Donnell, who built the New York Subway and who vowed to send Maurice to the University of Pennsylvania when the time was ripe; Mabel Flannery, stolen from the Khedive of Egypt by a millionaire from Montana, who in the process somehow became her uncle (Maurice loved her violently at the age of five); the Countess Batzezka, exiled from the court of Russia for appearing at a grand ball as a spider with the most tenuous of gauzy veils, and for loving, not wisely but too well, a certain Grand Duke; George Edmunds, who, through Maurice's father, bought "*Die Lustige Witwe*" for a song; Horatio Battersby, jovial English political-journalist who gave Maurice his first drink; the Shah of Persia, who conferred decorations on the waiters of Pupp's Hotel in lieu of tipping them; hundreds of others not to be forgotten.

Later came school in England. Readjustments, the quashing of Latin instincts and continental influences, a complete volteface. Schoolmasters telling one that one spoke the French of a Belgian cheesemonger; more honest schoolmasters appealing to one about the gender of a certain noun; cricket which one hated to play but loved to read about in the papers; diffidence in friendship; everlasting beatings to insure discipline by master and prefect; the entire baggage of life at an English public-school.

Paris. First the confinement of a *lycée*, then the liberty of an English school in Auteuil. *L'École Buissonnière*.

Over the gate and across the tracks to the Henri Martin Ceinture station; the Metro station of Clichy, glaring lights and one's handkerchief stolen out of one's pocket by coryphées who subsequently ignored one because of one's youth; the last, desperate *bock* at a small café and, contingent upon a gratuity, the waiter's information as to the locality of where to learn Life; one's superiority over one's transatlantic companion and one's acceptance of Madame's qualification as a jockey.

"*C'est pour ça qu'on est si jeune,*" she said.

And one hastened to assure her:

"*Pour sur, je monte les chevaux de Monsieur Vanderbilt.*"

And the heart-rending walk back to Auteuil, in the approaching dawn.

Nineteen-fourteen and America. Havermore College, near Philadelphia. A Quaker college, chosen because they played cricket there. Thee and Thou. Liberty and license. Drink and débutantes, whispers over whiskey, letters to and from Vassar, Miss Spence's, Wellesley. The discovery by accident of Swinburne, thereby of Baudelaire, and then Verlaine. Mademoiselle de Maupin, loaned to one by a Chicago sub-deb who spoke *cocotte* French; week-ends on Long Island that differed in no respect from week-ends in Westchester County or in Connecticut; week-ends in Jersey where one had a far better time; week-ends in Atlantic City when one realized how worldly one really was.

The war, then. On the point of being fired from college, and, further, intoxicated by a patriotism he had no business to feel, Maurice enlisted early in April and in three weeks was training in England. Then France: mud, horror, stupidity, discomfort. Lying in filthy shell-holes amid the most damnably foolish exhibition of the human faculty; being downtrodden and standing for it; discussing Schopenhauer over buckets of garbage and laughing at the infinitely remote past. Gas, then, and thank God, hospital.

London, a long rest, amour in Hyde

Park and in Great William Street under God's open sky. Devonshire, for recuperation. Back to France. Eight of them in charge of a corporal who went off a. w. o. l. Maurice steering them without molestation to within thirty-eight miles of their divisional headquarters and being nabbed. A New York cop as A. P. M. and the British jail for safe-keeping. Jail after jail, seven of them. Burial detail and becoming more dirty than ever up the line. Suddenly being released without reason and sent to the front again. Paris. The army being devoutly consigned to hell. Civilian clothes. Three weeks of drunkenness, splendid, deep, lyrical. Forged movement orders and the return to one's division. The Armistice. . . .

How bald the mere resuming of the facts seemed! And yet, as in his mind he went over the mental changes for which these mere doings were landmarks, he felt, looking over his life, that for all the youthfulness of it, yet there seemed to be something varied, rich almost.

What he must do, really, was to be an intellectual missionary. He must show these youths and girls that there was something else beyond the horizon of their windless landscapes; he must rouse them from their heavy satisfaction to a curiosity. It would be easy to do.

III

IN the early autumn of 1920 Maurice became a member of the University faculty and, at the same time, a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He found the former occupation more pleasant, for the other offered merely the continuance of a routine which he had half-heartedly begun when first he had learned by rote "*Mensa, feminine, a table*" some fifteen-odd years before. Again, it was flattering to be the youngest man in his department, and, while he discouraged any mention of his name other than prefixed by the simple title of Mr., still there was a subtle gratification in the determinedly professional nomenclature

used in America. For a time he considered adopting teaching as a career.

It was his colleagues rather than even his students who dissuaded him, after the glamor of the first days passed.

As he looked about him at the Faculty club, or stopped at somebody's office to borrow a match, or chatted with the few exceptions, he realized that it would never do. With the greater part of their ideals, he was perhaps in accord; but the practise of them left him absolutely cold. They abjured hard facts and buried themselves in a mass of theoretical abstruseness; they dug away and pushed forward a quarter of an inch into burrows of nugatory value. Perhaps, once, they had had keen desires; perhaps once they had been able to feel at first hand something of the sorrows and the joys of the world that the great masters had snatched from life and set down in letters of immortal fire. But by dint of endless repetition, the brightness had dimmed and they had only seen small parts here and there, as though suffering from ophthalmic obstructions.

And they had begun to turn circles. From the real thing they had gone into how it was produced, and with a pseudo-scientific equipment they had created an extraordinary learning which consisted in how to show people at large to do things that only a few possibly could ever do. Thus pedagogy. And the thing was multiplicative: soon, thought Maurice, they would be creating a science for the teaching of pedagogy and so forth to the *n*th degree. By becoming self-conscious, they had killed spontaneity, that quality which created the very virtues they aimed at.

Moreover, once trapped, once seized by this madness and drugged and befuddled, they considered the ones who among them resisted their encroachment as slipshod, unscholarly. The reward of a title heightened the brilliance that they circumscribed about their patient hewing of splinters and drawing of drops; and failure to obtain this title by subjecting one's self to the crippling influences of this menial and worthless

galley-labor was dismissed as reprehensibly shiftless. From among one hundred Doctors of Philosophy, Maurice could not name more than a half-dozen who had not been *avarié* by obtaining the degree.

He was sent for by the member of his department in charge of his courses.

"Mr. Delaquerrière," asked Professor Ranse, "what are you supposed to be teaching?"

"Freshman and Sophomore French!"

"Which consists in . . .?"

There was a razor-sharp irony in the voice.

"You've been at it longer than I, sir, you must know. . . ."

The little man blushed:

"This is no time for levity, Delaquerrière. You are paid to teach the fundamentals of French. Do you do it?"

"As best I can," Maurice replied.

"What, in that case," asked Professor Ranse, "have James Branch Cabell and Ambrose Bierce to do with the teaching of French to the best of one's ability?"

There was in his words a contempt that irritated Maurice and he found himself beginning to become annoyed. He wished he could explain how their lamentable ignorance of the meaning of the word *irony* had led him to speak of France and how from the author of *Thaïs* he had come to that of *Jurgen*. But it was useless, he was sure. To Professor Ranse it was much more important that they be able to transpose in phonetic script "*Bonjour, où est la fille de mon oncle?*" than that they know that American literature had not died with Longfellow. He wondered even if Professor Ranse himself. . . .

"Didn't you think 'The Rivet in Grandfather's Neck' . . .?" he queried.

Professor Ranse looked at him over his spectacles, debating as to whether the impertinence was intended.

He seemed not quite convinced, and so he compromised.

"I don't know if you're being flip-pant. . . ."

Maurice conjured up the look he had

S. S.—Dec.—5

seen on the well-scrubbed seraphs of a Church of England choir.

"Anyhow, I don't know the book . . . and I don't want to. Now, I don't believe there's been anything at all since Edith Wharton. In our profession it doesn't do to leave one's self open to the charge of lacking thoroughness. Your mind's not fully trained yet; but don't let it wander. Stick to Fraser and Squair."

There was nothing much Maurice could answer. He saw the futility of trying to convince the veteran of the relative importance of teaching phonetic pronunciation of French to future farmers and ranchers of the Pacific hinterland, and that of informing them that, in their own day and about their own surrounding, people were thinking and feeling and creating beautiful things. Besides, his cigarette had burned down to the cork tip and it was shortly going to be impossible to hold. Nor was there anywhere to lay it.

He bowed himself out.

Another member of his department, Doctor Blansdale, was a sort of metaphysical mathematician in terms of literature. His intellectual ideal of the perfect thesis was one which would take a play or a book and trace the vacillations of a curve that represented some feature of the work across a ground of squared paper. It was tantamount to making a graph of the advance of the plot or of the development of character and comparing it with others. He offered to direct Maurice's thesis and suggested a comparison of male and female characters in Beaumarchais. Or, perhaps, Paul as against Virginia? Maurice vaguely hoped that the resultant curves might prove futuristically Paphian and dismissed the idea.

Finally he resorted to choosing for his Ph.D. the broadest subject they would allow, which was a consideration of the discussion of the Symbolist movement of French literature in American periodicals together with a bibliography. At least there was something tangible there, although outside of Huneker nobody had ever seemed to bother very

much about the business, save Henry James, whose black geese swiftly turned into white swans.

But what of all impressed Maurice the most keenly was the life, as apart from their work, that these men (whom the local press insisted upon calling savants) led. A few were quite normal gentlemen. Most of them either could not forget the importance of the tonic accent and so pestered their wives or acquaintances, or else, if they did forget, they were indifferent. Some were merely silly; others were much like real-estate people or merchants, thinking and knowing nothing outside their own line. Once he sat at a table with three Deans who through dinner did nothing but chortle over filthy stories of drummer variety, almost obviously congratulating themselves upon their non-academic *brio*.

"And the clerk wanted to know if they were married . . ." laughed the Dean of the School of Social Sciences.

For the first time, Maurice found himself pitying Faculty wives.

IV

WITH the students it was different. For one thing, almost nine-tenths of their number were girls. Men considered any course that was not strictly professional and hence materially profitable in the future as a "girl-course." Two or three men who had been in the A. E. F. and hoped some day to return to Paris; a few youths who came because Spanish was scheduled at hours that would not prevent their sleeping late or otherwise interfere with their private lives; some because they believed a young instructor might be easy; but the rest were girls.

Of these, some came in order to receive, if they passed, three of the hundred units required for the achieving of an A.B. degree. Others were interested in acquiring a certain polish: they would adorn drawing-rooms which they would call parlors and intersperse into the conversation bits of French probably, and be considered "awfully clever linguists."

A few wished to learn French. Still others had heard that Maurice was amusing or different or easy or nice. He did what he could with them. He would require them to read Voltaire or Anatole France and report on them in French. He would send the entire class to an exhibition of wood-cuts or portraits and have them write reports. He would encourage them to think, and if they already did, to do so independently. He was youthful and enthusiastic.

Moreover, he was extraordinarily patient, and if ever he lost his temper, he managed to conceal his anger underneath an icy sarcasm. So long as his students slept noiselessly or whispered to each other with a pretense of clandestinity he cared very little; it was only when a loutish athlete held his newspaper aloft in front of him and slouched back in his chair to gaze up at it, or when a particularly brazen co-educated hussy applied cosmetics to her countenance under his very eyes, that he protested. Doubtless, the generally accepted opinion of him was that he was conceited and, on the whole, rather cold, but that he might be played upon. After all, wasn't he French? And weren't the French supposed to. . . . So it went.

But it was agreeable to expatiate upon the differences in freedom between the Middle Ages and a modern democracy, to draw attention to the actuality of Pascal and to discuss Romain Rolland. At best, sometimes he believed he noticed a glow of responsive appreciation in the eyes of somebody, somewhere. At worst, it was very pleasant to hear oneself making epigrams. If the only thing he ever did were to kindle one tiny flicker within one soul to a white flame, then his trouble would not have been futile. And yet—why was it always the most typically flapperish, some individual who had doubtless been flirting all through his class with the one eligible male, that came to thank him, at the end of the hour, for the interesting talk he had given them? And why were most of the genuinely alert minds of his class the possession of girls unlovely in external appearance?

He was ever wary to avoid any very intimate contact socially with his pupils, but with other students he occasionally mingled. They were all of the same pattern. Physically he began to doubt whether there were, anywhere on the Pacific coast, a pair of slim ankles? Mentally, the association with these girls offered bizarre contrasts and a continual stimulus to his sense of humor. First, they were pagan: the country and the climate and the pioneer conditions of their history contributed to make them so. And, being pagan, they lived frankly by the senses. But over this, immigrants from the vast, pleasureless Middle West and other puritanic and repressed peoples had thrown a tenuous gloss of hypocritical respectability. They allowed themselves to be very generally mauled about and kissed, and it was his pride only that prevented Maurice from achieving a reputation for being "a good number." Few of them, however, reached any stage more advanced than that of casual caresses. Then the attitude of the men toward the girls was a never-ending source of amusement. It was part of their standard to be real, red-blooded fellows; to wear dirty corduroys and sombrero hats, to drink themselves what they termed "cut," which meant "slopped-up," to assume a tone of gruff contempt toward their "dames," much like a Pasha toward his harem. Or perhaps more like an Apache toward his "donzelle."

They were at bottom simple fellows, and the most ingenuous of flattery on the part of the female invariably succeeded. They became engaged, two or three times and variously, and then they married and settled down and the men went into business and the women became mothers, and so it continued in a melancholy manner. Only a small number ever began to be aware of the infinite potentialities that life, when led through the intelligence, might give them. The rest merely existed.

It was at the end of his first year that Maurice really saw that something was amiss. Lionel Beacon, a unique creature, combining in the most paradoxical

way the mind of a true scholar and the fancy of a satiric buffoon, awakened him from his lethargy.

"You write decent poetry, don't you?" he said.

"I suppose so!"

"It's got finish and grace. You have creative ardor. You enjoy writing and you get away with it?" he went on.

"Yes," agreed Maurice. "But what are you driving at?"

"Well, then, what in the name of God Almighty are you doing here?"

"Teaching! Intellectual mission among the heathen. Wearing knickerbockers and at other times spats. Getting them nearer to what Marcus Aurelius termed civilization: to be surprised at nothing."

"You're a fool," said Beacon.

A silence.

"You ought to fold your tent and all that sort of rot. Go to Harvard if you must teach. But better: go to New York!"

"Go East, young man," mocked Maurice.

"Certainly. You will find your own people there; men trying to do things, or at any rate using their brain. You'll find stimulating surroundings. What do you get here?"

Maurice reflected.

"Twelve hundred a year," he said, "and the best climate. . . ."

"Yes; climate! But what else? Look at the club and the intellectual derelicts; look right in your department. Look at that arch over which the Professor of Latin sat up all of a week composing—and when they had finished cutting the inscription on the bridge some less scholarly proletarian in another department discovered that the first word of the lot was wrong. '*Hanc pontem . . .*'"

He sniffed.

Maurice was speechless.

"Regard the only decent building among the wildest assortment of architectural experiments that was ever got together. Jambled flat up against it they've stuck a bust of Lincoln that looks like a hunk of mud thrown by a naughty schoolboy. And consider that

silly bench with the bears' heads on either side. Wow!"

V

It was all over now. Two years he had been at it, two regular years and two summer sessions. This was the last class he would have, perhaps forever.

A student passed by.

"Good-by, Mr. Delaquerrière. I heard you were leaving."

"Yes, I am going abroad, for two years or more."

"Going to teach, sir?"

"No. . . ." He fingered in his pocket the letter announcing his appointment for a research scholarship in a French university. "No," he went on, "I'm going to study like the devil. And I am going to write. And if I can't get away with it, I shall come back and teach again."

The young student fidgeted.

"We shall miss you, sir."

"Thanks. Good-by, and the best of luck!" said Maurice, as he walked toward his classroom.

"Queer duck!" thought the student. "Pretty good boy for a frog!"

VI

How he had looked forward to this class! How he had rehearsed the events of it in his mind! He would enter as usual and begin without calling the roll.

"For two years I have not called the roll, as you know, because I have always believed those who want to learn will come. I don't care a hang for the others, if they do the work and pass the exes."

There would be a slight stir; certain school-teachers (the Summer Session was recruited largely from among them) would disapprove of his lack of discipline.

For the last class he had appropriately assigned Alphonse Daudet's story for translation. Alsace-Lorraine. He would be there soon! Strasbourg seemed so near to him.

He continued the imaginary class exercises.

"Miss Heath, have you ever by any

chance heard of a man called Alphonse Daudet?"

"No, sir."

Three hands raised.

"Mr. Denny?"

"He was a Frenchman."

"When did he live? What did he do?" Oh, the bitterness of the question!

"Dunno, sir!" from Mr. Denny, with a tone that implied "Quit picking on me!"

"And you, Miss Wright?"

She would tell him, a few meagre facts, elicited from the notes.

"Anybody happen to look up anything about Daudet or Alsace-Lorraine in an encyclopedia?"

Silence. He would insure its being a long one. Then, violently:

"That's enough. Close your books. Try to listen to me."

He would tell them all he had thought of himself and of them, he would unburden himself of the accumulated and guarded observations that were the fruits of his two years among them.

It was abysmally hopeless. You cannot begin by improving the universities, because to them come the graduates of the schools at an age where their characters are virtually formed. But by the same token, you could do nothing with the schools, because they were taught by university graduates. The fault lay far deeper than merely in education: it had roots that were buried far in the foundations of American life.

Colonists, recruited from among the persecuted of the Old World, arriving in a huge land, marking off gigantic strips of territory for their own possession or exchanging acres of ground for the whiskey that was to ruin the indigenous race and calling: "This is a mine; hands off!" Thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions following them to this fabled realm of plenty, new treasures found daily and fierce competition. Expansion of every sort materially. With prosperity actually gained, a kindly but inefficacious desire for better things, these being always estimated in terms of tangible value. Gold became the price of putting up the tallest

cathedral in the country; and from God on, down the line, everything was to be expressed in costly bigness. With Puritanism, Philistinism; with the two, Democracy. Education here was wide and all-including. Every man in the State had a right to learn, less by virtue of his aptitude and superiority than by the mere fact of being born in the State. It was so old, it had been said before by Nietzsche, whom they had never read, but whom they knew from Teddy Roosevelt and William Jennings Bryan to be a black devil who had gone mad as a punishment for evil. They were "current men"!

There had never been and there would never be any genuine national expression less unlovely than canned meat and diverse motor-cars and monstrous buildings and the eternal torture of cut-throat competition. A few gallant souls would rebel; but they would be the despised: dirty Yids, filthy greasers, rotten wops and bohunks and Dutchmen. The true American would be democratic, contented, capable of winning financial victories, but virtually incapable of feeling any emotion with the accompanying discrimination of the intellect. In Science, Law, Agriculture, Engineering, Business they would be superb; in Art, inferior even to the Carthaginians. And, being what they were, their freedom would enslave them more thoroughly than the harshest despotism; they would be the prey to religious and political hysteria. Intellectually, save only so far as material gain is concerned, a nation of morons.

Education! Half of them here today in this class were college graduates. Not one, before yesterday, had ever heard of Rabelais. They must remember him, treasure his memory among that of authors who have created dirty stories. Then the men in private can leer over the illustrations and the women agitate for the withdrawal of his books from every library in the country. Pouah!

He would enlarge upon all these matters: Poe, neglected and starving; Cabell and Dreiser persecuted; the veiling of statues or their deboshing to con-

form to the standards of civic virtue; the creator sneered at as an unproductive loafer.

Oh God, and oh God! How he would talk!

VII

HE entered the room. He did not call the roll.

"For two years," said Maurice Delaquerrière, "I have always believed those who wanted to learn would come. I have never cared about the others. . . ."

Maurice gazed at the faces before him. There was a slight stir: the school-teachers evidently disapproved of his lack of discipline. An athlete, flunked the year before and now making up work in order to re-enter in September, was toying with the cord of a girl's sweater. She was smiling beatifically, with a silly, gratified twist to her bloodless lips. Presently they would hold hands or press co-educated thighs. And they would blush and titter.

A school-teacher was fumbling through her bag; she drew out numerous letters, a stamp, three faded violets, a bar of Hershey's Chocolate and a return-ticket to Walla Walla, Washington, which she scanned eagerly. Two co-eds sniggered over a letter. A zealous old man was revising his lesson. An old maid—a member of the legion, who, having lost cat, parrot or dog, go in for the Higher Education—was writing her name across the fly-leaf of her text book: Sally Scoggins, Sally Scoggins, Sally Scoggins, over and over again, and once more, Sally Scoggins. It was enough to drive one mad. A girl looked at her shoes.

"Six-eighty?" whispered her neighbor.

Maurice was silent.

What was the good of it? They would not understand. None of them. Ever. They would merely resent it and hate him. After all, weren't they happy in their bovine, fatuous way? Who was he to . . .? And yet. . . .

"The examination will be tomorrow!" Maurice announced.

They waited. He paused, bowed his head.

"I shall not hold class today. If anybody has any questions to ask, I shall be pleased to answer them. Class dismissed!"

VIII

". . . AND I can't tell you, Mr. Delaquerrière. . . ."

"We've enjoyed the class so much. It's been fine!"

". . . And the best of luck for the future. . . ."

". . . And when you come back, I sure hope to take a course of yours. . . ."

They cackled and smirked and grunted and squawked. Pfui!



Symbol

By A. Newberry Choyce

TROY'S Helen you are; you are the loveliness
That slaved the soul of Roman Antony
And kept that soldier in such sweet duress . . .
Oh! you are Sappho by the Lesbian Sea.

And you are stars and blossoms, singing-birds,
The little rains of April, shining bees,
Gold moons among the willows, moon-lit herds
Of shy deer marching sweetly through the trees.

And one day I shall fashion in a book
A song of lovely things as poets do,
So all the lovers of the land may look
At their dear loves, oh Loveliest! in you.



LISTEN to all a woman tells you and you will learn a quarter of what she knows.



Evidence

By Paul Deresco Augsburg

OSCAR possessed a strictly legal mind. Nothing was true unless backed by undisputed facts, admissible under the rules of evidence. He didn't believe in a God because no ecclesiastic had ever shown a deposition signed by such a divinity. He didn't even believe in Hell, despite the expert testimony of several popes and numerous cardinals.

"No brimstone—not even a pitchfork or the cooked body of an unbaptized baby—has been offered as Exhibit A," he declared earnestly in the midst of a theologic argument. "There's not a lay court in the world that would convict Satan of soul-arson. It would be necessary to prove, first, that there is such an individual as Satan; second, that there is a soul to be burned."

And so Oscar went through life, seriously arguing the non-reality of the most obvious facts. Once, while walking through San Francisco's Chinatown, he happened upon a hatchet man just as he was decapitating a fellow celestial of a rival tong. He saw the murderee's head drop to the sidewalk, then saw the corpse and the head bundled into baskets and hurried down Sacramento Street toward the waterfront. He would not admit that the Chink had been murdered, however, because the remains were never seen again.

"The *corpus delicti* was not actually established," was Oscar's explanation of his skepticism. "My own testimony is impeachable in this instance, for I am not absolutely certain that I was not the victim of visual illusion due to astigmatism. While I am inclined to believe

that I saw a human head drop to the sidewalk, I do not know that said head properly belonged upon the neck of the alleged murderee aforesaid. Were such a head and body found, however, they would constitute material verification of my ocular testimony, and I would be willing to admit there had been a murder, even despite a possible contention by the defence that the man had personally decapitated himself."

It seemed strange to us who knew him that Oscar should fall in love. Tender passion and Oscar were so incongruous that his confession was quite a shock; we felt much as if the president of the W. C. T. U. had staggered up and hic-coughed for a drink.

The affair amused us, of course; and yet it bothered us.

"Some one of these days he's going to demand an affidavit from Alice stating that she's a pure gal and never snores or kicks in her sleep," said Charlie. "He'll want to file it away in his vault as evidence in case she has misrepresented herself. It's too bad," he added sadly. "Alice is such a nice one."

The *modus operandi* of Oscar's courtship was something we never did learn. It was rumored that he wooed her by reciting cases in torts, with now and then a Supreme Court decision thrown in as a special *coup d'amour*. For four weeks he carried on his siege, and then Alice went East to visit an aunt.

Of course Oscar began writing love letters. He kept carbon copies of everything he wrote; and one epistle—carrying the assertion, I presume, that Alice was the most wonderful girl in the

world, as witness the attestation affixed below—was stamped by a notary public before being mailed.

Oscar had a post-office box. He found out when every train from the East was due, and he used to be on hand while the letters were being distributed. Again and again I would see him standing in the corridor of the Federal Building, watching the mail clerk's hand dart from box to box. For a time he was rewarded regularly.

Then the letters from Alice became fewer, and finally stopped. Vainly Oscar kept his vigil at the post-office. Vainly he wrote messages of protest and query. Vainly he threatened, I suppose, to foreclose or garnishee her affections or sue or something.

The girl's silence was beginning to go to his head. A strange light came into his eyes. Oscar was surely growing insane.

"Quit watching that post-office box. It'll drive you crazy," I told him one day, after three weeks had passed without a letter from Alice. "Evidently—to be brutally frank—she has fallen in love with someone else and hasn't the grace to tell you so. Now go about your law work and try to forget her."

But Oscar shook his head.

"I have no testimony—not a single document to prove that she doesn't love me any more," he said. "I can't give Alice up on circumstantial evidence. It wouldn't be fair to her, and—and my conscience would hurt me. No, I have no *reason* to believe she hasn't been

writing regularly; her letters have just miscarried."

Another week passed, and by that time Oscar was almost a raving maniac. He stood before the little glass door of his box the entire day, not even leaving for luncheon. Finally, after the last mail had been distributed, he rushed from the building and ran to his office. There he hurriedly wrote a letter, signed it and mailed it.

The next morning there was an envelope in his box. I happened into the post-office just after he had opened it. There stood Oscar calmly contemplating a sheet of paper. His face was impressibly sad, but all signs of dementia had left him.

"You were right," he said glumly, handing me the note. "There's another man."

I glanced at the following communication, written in my legal friend's unmistakable hand:

Dear Oscar,

You're a damned fool. Alice doesn't love you. She has given her heart to somebody else.

Yours,
OSCAR

"I'm glad the affair is finally over," remarked Charlie later in the day. "I doubt if they'd be happy, anyway. When their first-born came along Oscar would have made Alice sign an affidavit that he was the father—and then he'd undoubtedly name the brat after William Howard Taft or the Dean of the Harvard Law School!"



THE trouble with taking a pretty woman out to dinner is that she spends the entire evening gazing either into the soup or into the mirror.



Such a Pretty Little Picture

By Dorothy Parker

MR. WHEELOCK was clipping the hedge. He did not dislike doing it. If it had not been for the faintly sickish odor of the privet bloom, he would definitely have enjoyed it. The new shears were so sharp and bright, there was such a gratifying sense of something done as the young green stems snapped off and the expanse of tidy, square hedge-top lengthened. There was a lot of work to be done on it. It should have been attended to a week ago, but this was the first day that Mr. Wheelock had been able to get back from the city before dinnertime.

Clipping the hedge was one of the few domestic duties that Mr. Wheelock could be trusted with. He was notoriously poor at doing anything around the house. All the suburb knew about it. It was the source of all Mrs. Wheelock's jokes. Her most popular anecdote was of how, the past winter, he had gone out and hired a man to take care of the furnace, after a seven-years' losing struggle with it. She had an admirable memory, and often as she had related the story, she never dropped a word of it. Even now, in the late summer, she could hardly tell it for laughing.

When they were first married, Mr. Wheelock had lent himself to the fun. He had even posed as being more inefficient than he really was, to make the joke better. But he had tired of his helplessness, as a topic of conversation. All the men of Mrs. Wheelock's acquaintance, her cousins, her brother-in-law, the boys she went to high school with, the neighbors' husbands, were adepts at putting up a shelf, at repairing a lock, or making a shirtwaist box.

Mr. Wheelock had begun to feel that there was something rather effeminate about his lack of interest in such things.

He had wanted to answer his wife, lately, when she enlivened some neighbor's dinner table with tales of his inadequacy with hammer and wrench. He had wanted to cry, "All right, suppose I'm not any good at things like that. What of it?"

He had played with the idea, had tried to imagine how his voice would sound, uttering the words. But he could think of no further argument for his case than that "What of it?" And he was a little relieved, somehow, at being able to find nothing stronger. It made it reassuringly impossible to go through with the plan of answering his wife's public railleries.

Mrs. Wheelock sat, now, on the spotless porch of the neat stucco house. Beside her was a pile of her husband's shirts and drawers, the price-tags still on them. She was going over all the buttons before he wore the garments, sewing them on more firmly. Mrs. Wheelock never waited for a button to come off, before sewing it on. She worked with quick, decided movements, compressing her lips each time the thread made a slight resistance to her deft jerks.

She was not a tall woman, and since the birth of her child she had gone over from a delicate plumpness to a settled stockiness. Her brown hair, though abundant, grew in an uncertain line about her forehead. It was her habit to put it up in curlers at night, but the crimps never came out in the right place. It was arranged with per-

fect neatness, yet it suggested that it had been done up and got over with as quickly as possible. Passionately clean, she was always redolent of the germicidal soap she used so vigorously. She was wont to tell people, somewhat redundantly, that she never employed any sort of cosmetics. She had unlimited contempt for women who sought to reduce their weight by dieting, cutting from their menus such nourishing items as cream and puddings and cereals.

Adelaide Wheelock's friends—and she had many of them—said of her that there was no nonsense about her. They and she regarded it as a compliment.

Sister, the Wheelocks' five-year-old daughter, played quietly in the gravel path that divided the tiny lawn. She had been known as Sister since her birth, and her mother still laid plans for a brother for her. Sister's baby carriage stood waiting in the cellar, her baby clothes were stacked expectantly away in bureau drawers. But raises were infrequent at the advertising agency where Mr. Wheelock was employed, and his present salary had barely caught up to the cost of their living. They could not conscientiously regard themselves as being able to afford a son. Both Mr. and Mrs. Wheelock keenly felt his guilt in keeping the bassinets empty.

Sister was not a pretty child, though her features were straight, and her eyes would one day be handsome. The left one turned slightly in toward the nose, now, when she looked in a certain direction; they would operate as soon as she was seven. Her hair was pale and limp, and her color bad. She was a delicate little girl. Not fragile in a picturesque way, but the kind of child that must be always undergoing treatment for its teeth and its throat and obscure things in its nose. She had lately had her adenoids removed, and she was still using squares of surgical gauze instead of handkerchiefs. Both she and her mother somehow felt that these gave her a sort of prestige.

She was additionally handicapped by her frocks, which her mother bought a

size or so too large, with a view to Sister's growing into them—an expectation which seemed never to be realized, for her skirts were always too long, and the shoulders of her little dresses came half-way down to her thin elbows. Yet, even discounting the unfortunate way she was dressed, you could tell, in some way, that she was never going to wear any kind of clothes well.

Mr. Wheelock glanced at her now and then as he clipped. He had never felt any fierce thrills of father-love for the child. He had been disappointed in her when she was a pale, large-headed baby, smelling of stale milk and warm rubber. Sister made him feel ill at ease, vaguely irritated him. He had had no share in her training; Mrs. Wheelock was so competent a parent that she took the places of both of them. When Sister came to him to ask his permission to do something, he always told her to wait and ask her mother about it.

He regarded himself as having the usual paternal affection for his daughter. There were times, indeed, when she had tugged sharply at his heart—when he had waited in the corridor outside the operating room; when she was still under the anesthetic, and lay little and white and helpless on her high hospital bed; once when he had accidentally closed a door upon her thumb. But from the first he had nearly acknowledged to himself that he did not like Sister as a person.

Sister was not a whining child, despite her poor health. She had always been sensible and well-mannered, amenable about talking to visitors, rigorously unselfish. She never got into trouble, like other children. She did not care much for other children. She had heard herself described as being "old-fashioned," and she knew she was delicate, and she felt that these attributes rather set her above them. Besides, they were rough and careless of their bodily well-being.

Sister was exquisitely cautious of her safety. Grass, she knew, was often apt to be damp in the late afternoon, so she was careful now to stay right in the

middle of the gravel path, sitting on a folded newspaper and playing one of her mysterious games with three petunias that she had been allowed to pick. Mrs. Wheelock never had to speak to her twice about keeping off wet grass, or wearing her rubbers, or putting on her jacket if a breeze sprang up. Sister was an immediately obedient child, always.

II

MRS. WHEELOCK looked up from her sewing and spoke to her husband. Her voice was high and clear, resolutely good-humored. From her habit of calling instructions from her upstairs window to Sister playing on the porch below, she spoke always a little louder than was necessary.

"Daddy," she said.

She had called him Daddy since some eight months before Sister was born. She and the child had the same trick of calling his name and then waiting until he signified that he was attending before they went on with what they wanted to say.

Mr. Wheelock stopped clipping, straightened himself and turned toward her.

"Daddy," she went on, thus reassured, "I saw Mr. Ince down at the post office today when Sister and I went down to get the ten o'clock mail—there wasn't much, just a card for me from Grace Williams from that place they go to up on Cape Cod, and an advertisement from some department store or other about their summer fur sale (as if I cared!), and a circular for you from the bank. I opened it; I knew you wouldn't mind.

"Anyway, I just thought I'd tackle Mr. Ince first as last about getting in our cordwood. He didn't see me at first—though I'll bet he really saw me and pretended not to—but I ran right after him. 'Oh, Mr. Ince!' I said. 'Why, hello, Mrs. Wheelock,' he said, and then he asked for you, and I told him you were finely, and everything. Then I said, 'Now, Mr. Ince,' I said, 'how about

getting in that cordwood of ours?'" And he said, 'Well, Mrs. Wheelock,' he said, 'I'll get it in soon's I can, but I'm short of help right now,' he said.

"Short of help! Of course I couldn't say anything, but I guess he could tell from the way I looked at him how much I believed it. I just said, 'All right, Mr. Ince, but don't you forget us. There may be a cold snap coming on,' I said, 'and we'll be wanting a fire in the living-room. Don't you forget us,' I said, and he said, no, he wouldn't.

"If that wood isn't here by Monday, I think you ought to do something about it, Daddy. There's no sense in all this putting it off, and putting it off. First thing you know there'll be a cold snap coming on, and we'll be wanting a fire in the living-room, and there we'll be! You'll be sure and 'tend to it, won't you, Daddy? I'll remind you again Monday, if I can think of it, but there are so many things!"

Mr. Wheelock nodded and turned back to his clipping—and his thoughts. They were thoughts that had occupied much of his leisure lately. After dinner, when Adelaide was sewing or arguing with the maid, he found himself letting his magazine fall face downward on his knee, while he rolled the same idea round and round in his mind. He had got so that he looked forward, through the day, to losing himself in it. He had rather welcomed the hedge-clipping; you can clip and think at the same time.

It had started with a story that he had picked up somewhere. He couldn't recall whether he had heard it or had read it—that was probably it, he thought, he had run across it in the back pages of some comic paper that someone had left on the train.

It was about a man who lived in a suburb. Every morning he had gone to the city on the 8:12, sitting in the same seat in the same car, and every evening he had gone home to his wife on the 5:17, sitting in the same seat in the same car. He had done this for twenty years of his life. And then one night he didn't come home. He never went

back to his office any more. He just never turned up again.

The last man to see him was the conductor on the 5:17.

"He come down the platform at the Grand Central," the man reported, "just like he done every night since I been working on this road. He put one foot on the step, and then he stopped sudden, and he said 'Oh, hell,' and he took his foot off of the step and walked away. And that's the last anybody see of him."

Curious how that story took hold of Mr. Wheelock's fancy. He had started thinking of it as a mildly humorous anecdote; he had come to accept it as fact. He did not think the man's sitting in the same seat in the same car need have been stressed so much. That seemed unimportant. He thought long about the man's wife, wondered what suburb he had lived in. He loved to play with the thing, to try to feel what the man felt before he took his foot off the car's step. He never concerned himself with speculations as to where the man had disappeared, how he had spent the rest of his life. Mr. Wheelock was absorbed in that moment when he had said "Oh, hell," and walked off. "Oh, hell" seemed to Mr. Wheelock a fine thing for him to have said, a perfect summary of the situation.

He tried thinking of himself in the man's place. But no, he would have done it from the other end. That was the real way to do it.

Some summer evening like this, say, when Adelaide was sewing on buttons, up on the porch, and Sister was playing somewhere about. A pleasant, quiet evening it must be, with the shadows lying long on the street that led from their house to the station. He would put down the garden shears, or the hose, or whatever he happened to be putting with—not throw the thing down, you know, just put it quietly aside—and walk out of the gate and down the street, and that would be the last they'd see of him. He would time it so that he'd just make the 6:03 for the city comfortably.

He did not go ahead with it from there, much. He was not especially anxious to leave the advertising agency forever. He did not particularly dislike his work. He had been an advertising solicitor since he had gone to work at all, and he worked hard at his job and, aside from that, didn't think about it much one way or the other.

It seemed to Mr. Wheelock that before he had got hold of the "Oh, hell" story he had never thought about anything much, one way or the other. But he would have to disappear from the office, too, that was certain. It would spoil everything to turn up there again. He thought dimly of taking a train going West, after the 6:03 got him to the Grand Central Terminal—he might go to Buffalo, say, or perhaps Chicago. Better just let that part take care of itself and go back to dwell on the moment when it would sweep over him that he was going to do it, when he would put down the shears and walk out the gate—

The "Oh, hell" rather troubled him. Mr. Wheelock felt that he would like to retain that; it completed the gesture so beautifully. But he didn't quite know to whom he should say it.

He might stop in at the post office on his way to the station and say it to the postmaster; but the postmaster would probably think he was only annoyed at there being no mail for him. Nor would the conductor of the 6:03, a train Mr. Wheelock never used, take the right interest in it. Of course the real thing to do would be to say it to Adelaide just before he laid down the shears. But somehow Mr. Wheelock could not make that scene come very clear in his imagination.

III

"DADDY," Mrs. Wheelock said briskly. He stopped clipping, and faced her.

"Daddy," she related, "I saw Doctor Mann's automobile going by the house this morning—he was going to have a look at Mr. Warren, his rheumatism's getting along nicely—and I called him in a minute, to look us over."

She screwed up her face, winked, and nodded vehemently several times in the direction of the absorbed Sister, to indicate that she was the subject of the discourse.

"He said we were going ahead finely," she resumed, when she was sure that he had caught the idea. "Said there was no need for those t-o-n-s-i-l-s to c-o-m-e-o-u-t. But I thought, soon's it gets a little cooler, some time next month, we'd just run in to the city and let Doctor Sturges have a look at us. I'd rather be on the safe side."

"But Doctor Lytton said it wasn't necessary, and those doctors at the hospital, and now Doctor Mann, that's known her since she was a baby," suggested Mr. Wheelock.

"I know, I know," replied his wife. "But I'd rather be on the safe side."

Mr. Wheelock went back to his hedge.

Oh, of course he couldn't do it; he never seriously thought he could, for a minute. Of course he couldn't. He wouldn't have the shadow of an excuse for doing it. Adelaide was a sterling woman, an utterly faithful wife, an almost slavish mother. She ran his house economically and efficiently. She harried the suburban trades people into giving them dependable service, drilled the succession of poorly paid, poorly trained maids, cheerfully did the thousand fussy little things that go with the running of a house. She looked after his clothes, gave him medicine when she thought he needed it, oversaw the preparation of every meal that was set before him; they were not especially inspirational meals, but the food was always nourishing and, as a general thing, fairly well cooked. She never lost her temper, she was never depressed, never ill.

Not the shadow of an excuse. People would know that, and so they would invent an excuse for him. They would say there must be another woman.

Mr. Wheelock frowned, and snipped at an obstinate young twig. Good Lord, the last thing he wanted was another woman. What he wanted was that moment when he realized he could do it, when he would lay down the shears—

Oh, of course he couldn't; he knew that as well as anybody. What would they do, Adelaide and Sister? The house wasn't even paid for yet, and there would be that operation on Sister's eye in a couple of years. But the house would be all paid up by next March. And there was always that well-to-do brother-in-law of Adelaide's, the one who, for all his means, put up every shelf in that great big house with his own hands.

Decent people didn't just go away and leave their wives and families that way. All right, suppose you weren't decent; what of it? Here was Adelaide planning what she was going to do when it got a little cooler, next month. She was always planning ahead, always confident that things would go on just the same. Naturally, Mr. Wheelock realized that he couldn't do it, as well as the next one. But there was no harm in fooling around with the idea. Would you say the "Oh, hell" now, before you laid down the shears, or right after? How would it be to turn at the gate and say it?

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Coles came down the street arm-in-arm, from their neat stucco house on the corner.

"See they've got you working hard, eh?" cried Mr. Coles genially, as they paused abreast of the hedge.

Mr. Wheelock laughed politely, marking time for an answer.

"That's right," he evolved.

Mrs. Wheelock looked up from her work, shading her eyes with her thimbled hand against the long rays of the low sun.

"Yes, we finally got Daddy to do a little work," she called brightly. "But Sister and I are staying right here to watch over him, for fear he might cut his little self with the shears."

There was general laughter, in which Sister joined. She had risen punctiliously at the approach of the older people, and she was looking politely at their eyes, as she had been taught.

"And how is my great big girl?" asked Mrs. Coles, gazing fondly at the child.

"Oh, much better," Mrs. Wheelock

answered for her. "Doctor Mann says we are going ahead finely. I saw his automobile passing the house this morning—he was going to see Mr. Warren, his rheumatism's coming along nicely—and I called him in a minute to look us over."

She did the wink and the nods, at Sister's back. Mr. and Mrs. Coles nodded shrewdly back at her.

"He said there's no need for those t-o-n-s-i-l-s to c-o-m-e o-u-t," Mrs. Wheelock called. "But I thought, soon's it gets a little cooler, some time next month, we'd just run in to the city and let Doctor Sturges have a look at us. I was telling Daddy, 'I'd rather be on the safe side,' I said."

"Yes, it's better to be on the safe side," agreed Mrs. Coles, and her husband nodded again, sagely this time. She took his arm, and they moved slowly off.

"Been a lovely day, hasn't it?" she said over her shoulder, fearful of having left too abruptly. "Fred and I are taking a little constitutional before supper."

"Oh, taking a little constitutional?" cried Mrs. Wheelock, laughing.

Mrs. Coles laughed also, three or four bars.

"Yes, just taking a little constitutional before supper," she called back.

Sister, weary of her game, mounted the porch, whimpering a little. Mrs. Wheelock put aside her sewing, and took the tired child in her lap. The sun's last rays touched her brown hair, making it a shimmering gold. Her

small, sharp face, the thick lines of her figure were in shadow as she bent over the little girl. Sister's head was hidden on her mother's shoulder, the folds of her rumpled white frock followed her limp, relaxed little body.

The lovely light was kind to the cheap, hurriedly built stucco house, to the clean gravel path, and the bits of closely cut lawn. It was gracious, too, to Mr. Wheelock's tall, lean figure as he bent to work on the last few inches of unclipped hedge.

Twenty years, he thought. The man in the story went through with it for twenty years. He must have been a man along around forty-five, most likely. Mr. Wheelock was thirty-seven. Eight years. It's a long time, eight years is. You could easily get so you could say that final "Oh, hell," even to Adelaide, in eight years. It probably wouldn't take more than four for you to know that you could do it. No, not more than two. . . .

Mrs. Coles paused at the corner of the street and looked back at the Wheelocks' house. The last of the light lingered on the mother and child group on the porch, gently touched the tall, white-clad figure of the husband and father as he went up to them, his work done.

Mrs. Coles was a large, soft woman, barren, and addicted to sentiment.

"Look, Fred; just turn around and look at that," she said to her husband. She looked again, sighing luxuriously. "Such a pretty little picture!"



WHEN a woman hears a man railing at matrimony she agrees with him first and marries him later.



The Little Joker of the Oldest Man

By Catharine Brody

I

NOTHING extraordinary about the house from the outside. It stood on a wide street of orderly houses set back from rows of orderly trees. Once one of the very best streets, the town had now discarded it in its wake very much like an adolescent boy his last pair of semi-worn short trousers. High-school teachers lived there, middle-salaried employes from the nearby city, the owner of the second largest drug-store in town, a few old women of diminishing income. Yet it was a street distinguished from the others, for on it, in a frame house of unabashed plainness, dwelt the oldest man in the town—the oldest man in the State of Illinois—the oldest graduate of the oldest university in America.

It was his ninety-eighth birthday. That morning, on opening his eyes, the oldest man conveyed by a faint tremor of the muscles about his mouth that he had something to communicate. Words rarely came from his lips now. His trained nurse, a hearty, middle-aged woman, as warmly interested in any signs of intelligence in her charge as if he had been a two-year-old, was at his side immediately. He lifted one weak hand, sere with age, and pointed to the calendar, hung by his request at the foot of the bed.

"Ninety-eight," he mumbled, fixing her with slow, discolored eyes. His hand dropped, but he continued to watch her dumbly, hoping to make her understand, and when he saw that he had, the crumpled lids slid over his eyes.

The nurse was transfixed with admiration.

"Ninety-eight years old!" she shouted in the old man's ear—he could hear somewhat. "Yes, sir, you're ninety-eight years old today, Mr. Durbar. You'll have a birthday cake, a birthday cake, do you hear?"

The bald yellow head crept forward on the long, bony neck a little to show that he had.

"You'll live to be a hundred yet," cried the nurse. "Yes, sir, it's a regular wonder, that's what it is!"

The oldest man opened his eyes again and a tiny light glimmered in them as he moved his head back and forward several times.

"You want to live to be a hundred, don't you, Mr. Durbar?" shrieked the nurse.

"Yes," came in a sighing whisper.

"He wants to live to be a hundred!" exclaimed the nurse proudly. "Well, I never! He will, too."

After she had fed him his gruel, the cousins with whom he lived—Miss Lydia and Miss Jane Moderwell—tiptoed in, leading a shriveled, cackling little woman, their octogenarian mother.

"Asleep?" whispered Miss Lydia, finger on lip.

"No, indeed," gushed the nurse. "He woke right up the minute I came in, and what do you think he did? He pointed to the calendar and said 'Ninety-eight'! And he said he wanted to live to be a hundred! Yes, sir, if he isn't the cleverest old gentleman! Don't you want to be a hundred, Mr. Dur—bar?" she cried, as the old man, guessing that they were talking about him, made a faint movement.

He nodded weakly.

"See!" said the nurse in great triumph.

"Mother, here's Cousin John says he wants to live to be a hundred," Miss Jane translated in a higher tone.

"What say?" from Mrs. Moderwell.

Miss Jane repeated.

"Wants to live to be a hundred," shrilled the old woman. "You don't say, Cousin John! Well, that's old enough to live, to be sure."

She giggled at her own joke. Being ten years younger than her Cousin John and still able to dress herself without help, to walk about on a cane, and in some part to enter into conversation, she affected great girlishness in the presence of this stack of bones bound with sere remnants of skin who could hardly sit up in his bed.

She had put on a frilled white cap to hide the roots of her gray hair, because she understood there would be company. Once she had been a good-looking woman, and though now beyond pity and beyond shame and beyond a great many other earthly attributes, it was affecting to notice how her vanity had survived.

Miss Lydia bent down to the bed and put her lips to one cold cheek. So did Miss Jane. Mrs. Moderwell contented herself with calling out, "Many happy returns, Cousin John."

The old man never moved, but his eyes, which had grown opaque like the eyes of a newborn baby, stared at them, blank of thought and of emotion. His mind processes went on somehow, they knew, because he surprised them on rare occasions with an apt remark, a gleam of interest, but he had almost lost the power of unveiling them.

The two younger women conferred with the nurse. There would be several committees of congratulation, some old friends, his lawyer. Yes, he would be able to lie downstairs, perhaps even to cut his cake if Nurse guided his hands.

The doorbell jangled into their talk.

"That's a young man from the *News*," said Miss Lydia with pride. "He telephoned last night from Chicago

and said he would be over first thing in the morning."

She leaned to the old man's ear.

"The *News* is going to write a story about you, Cousin John. A story about your ninety-eighth birthday."

Another faint glow spread over the old man's eyes. His lips moved, opened. He managed to utter the word "dignified."

"Yes, of course," Miss Lydia assured him at the top of her voice. "It'll be a nice, dignified story. I'll see to that."

Miss Lydia went to attend to the reporter, Miss Jane to bake the cake.

The most exciting day of the year in that still, plain frame house had begun.

II

TEN years ago, when Mrs. Moderwell was still a plump, pretty old lady, a little hard of hearing, the three women found themselves in a situation not uncommon among the leftovers of "old families." A sufficient fortune allowed to remain infertile in Mr. Moderwell's time was bearing hardly enough to pay taxes.

Miss Lydia and Miss Jane were the sort of women who develop into old maids despite the predictions of their friends. They had been very pretty girls, hearty, healthy, amiable and capable, and yet somehow. . . . Perhaps Miss Lydia was a shade too sharp with men, and Miss Jane a shade too fluttering; both, too unyielding. They stood apart and watched the girls they had grown up with getting married and listened to Mrs. Moderwell's unceasing regrets and became a little haughtier every year until there was no further need of touchy pride. At the time when they were obliged to recount the family income, Miss Lydia, short, fat and determined, was well up in the thirties, and Miss Jane, a replica of her sister cast in a gentler, flabbier mold, not far behind. Miss Lydia cleaned house and paid bills. Miss Jane cooked. That was all they knew how to do.

In these straits Miss Lydia conceived an idea that flushed her cheeks and brightened her eyes. The tea-room had

not yet come into its own, but the town, growing prosperous, had accumulated a large class of housewives who would rather spend their time on each other's front porches than in their kitchens. Miss Lydia proposed to supply such housewives with biscuits, cakes, pies, pastry. She even dreamed of an immodest gilt sign, "The Moderwell Company," or "L. and J. Moderwell"—the Moderwell Company would sound better. In fact, she wanted to "turn the house into a bakery," as Mrs. Moderwell moaned.

Both younger women, though not adventurous, thought of the idea with some excitement and were ready to give the bakery the same unreserved loyalty which they would have given to a husband, a home, and children.

Mrs. Moderwell sobbed a little and went upstairs and unearthed the spectacles that she seldom wore because they made her look too old, and bethought herself of her Cousin John, who lived in Wheaton and was wealthy. She expected a present of a round sum perhaps or some advice to the point, but nothing so overwhelming as what followed.

The day an answer came she surprised her daughters in the surreptitious act of making their first order of cake.

"You've no call to go on with your bakery any more. We're going to have all the money we need," she announced.

With that she laid Cousin John's letter on the kitchen table.

Cousin John hadn't really written it. His hand shook too much even then. It came from his lawyer, who explained that since the death of a niece with whom Mr. Durbar had lived the old man was lonely. He was glad to hear from Cousin Ann, his nearest living relative, and sorry that she was in poor circumstances. He would like to help her as well as find a comfortable home for himself. He therefore proposed to make his home with the Moderwells and pay enough board to provide for them. And, the lawyer added cautiously, Mr. Durbar had asked him to mention that his cousins would not repent of any consid-

eration they would show in making his last days happy.

It was plain enough, Cousin John meant to remember them in his will. Perhaps to leave them everything. That order was the first and last batch of cake the Moderwell Company ever baked.

They were disappointed in a way. It meant a bare sufficiency for the present and a time of waiting. But they talked Cousin John over in half sentences, because it didn't seem quite right to be depending upon—still, he was a very old man. Sooner or later—it was everybody's fate. If he left them only a few hundreds a year they could manage. He might, probably would, leave them more. His lawyer had hinted—they would be patient. It wouldn't, it didn't seem as if he—not but that they wished he would live to be a hundred if that were possible. Only most people don't.

The day Cousin John came, the Moderwells got their first taste of housing a curiosity. The local paper carried a piece about the old man who wouldn't trust himself to an automobile, and it was sitting up straight in a one-horse carriage that Cousin John rode from the station to the Moderwell house, a stiff, shrunken little man with a cane, an umbrella, a black bag, and his own way of doing everything, even to making gruel.

For the benefit of the public he told his history to the reporter of the town paper. He had been born twelve years after the War of 1812; in his young manhood, coming to settle in the Middle West, he had passed through Chicago without stopping because "there wasn't any Chicago." He and a young man named Bliss had started one of the oldest law firms in the country. He had served in his own State legislature, and in Congress. He had been active at the birth of the Republican party. He remembered names, dates, characters long buried and forgotten. His law partner was dead, his first wife, his second wife, his only son, his niece had died. But he—he meant to live on.

"The Durbars are a long-lived family," he said proudly. "My own father

lived to be ninety-six and my mother eighty-eight. A steady life—that's what does it. That's the kind of a life I've lived."

But he was not, on the whole, a reminiscent old man. In summer he sat hour after hour huddled up in a huge chair in the sunny corner of the porch and listened to the news read to him by Miss Lydia. He went walking around the block and a short way down the avenue, attended by a sister on either side, hugging his cane. In winter he lived in the sitting-room, the warmest room in the house since it was nearest the kitchen, and here, on the couch in the corner away from the window, he took his afternoon naps.

Inclined to be a little brisk at first, he grew stiller and stiller. Days went by before he would utter one consecutive sentence. In his ninetieth year he had a stroke. The Moderwells called in several doctors. They did not wish his death to be imputed to any self-interest of theirs. His lawyer came. It looked as if the old man really would go.

But he rallied, and almost the first thing he did on his recovery was to mumble an order for a trained nurse. The Moderwells were a little hurt, but they understood that by means of her, Cousin John hoped to hang on to life a little longer.

At this time the old alumni of Cousin John's college announced that he was their oldest graduate. The town found him to be the oldest living resident, and the State discovered him, via the press, to be its oldest man. He became not only a curiosity but a precious curiosity. His nurse, and his doctor, too, began to take a sportsmanlike interest in beating death. The papers heralded his every birthday and reported the minute details of his birthday cakes. His college sent representatives. Old men who recollected John Durbar sent telegrams.

As for Cousin John, year by year he "held his own." Yearly, he remembered a little less, saw and heard a little less, sat longer and longer in his great chair until he could no longer sit up except for a few minutes each day. His nurse

vowed that he would live to be a hundred. Even Miss Lydia and Miss Jane and Mrs. Moderwell, though they now felt sure that his will would contain favorable mention of them, took a sort of pride in his tenacity. Each time he had a slight cold, or an attack of indigestion and lay on his back, gasping weakly for breath, they watched by his bedside with as much excitement as spectators at the last lap of a horse race. But he never gave them much trouble. He was "as good as a baby," the nurse said.

III

His ninety-eighth birthday was a great event, the more so as he had just recovered from an influenza, when the doctor had held forth the slimmest of hopes.

"But we saved him, thank God," Miss Lydia told the reporter for the *News*.

She reviewed the details of his life as she did on every birthday, stressing the State senatorship, Congress, the Republican party.

"He has a wonderful vitality," she concluded impressively. "All during his illness *we* often despaired of his life, but Mr. Durbar—never! And just this morning he said he wanted to live to be a hundred."

"It must run in your family," ventured the reporter with a glance at old Mrs. Moderwell, who sat in a corner of the parlor, veined hands in lap, straining hard to hear.

Miss Lydia said with reserve:

"Well, yes. I guess mother's eighty-eight."

With age, Mrs. Moderwell had grown very susceptible to the attention of strangers. She was apt to preen and giggle and make what she considered bright remarks over and over again, because her memory was failing.

"I suppose she remembers Mr. Durbar as a young man," hazarded the reporter.

Miss Lydia translated reluctantly.

"Mother, here's the young man wants to know whether you remember Cousin John as a young man."

"To be sure, to be sure," gurgled the old woman, overjoyed. "He was a very handsome young man. Oh, my, yes, I remember him. He was a very handsome young man." She laughed a little with pleasure at having got a hearing and looked from the reporter to her daughter for more.

"Did you tell him Cousin John was a State senator?" she inquired.

"Yes, mother, yes." Miss Lydia turned away, while Mrs. Moderwell struggled for some means of holding attention.

"Mind you tell him facts, not fancies," she called out suddenly with much coyness.

This struck her as so good that after a while she repeated it in a high, monotonous treble.

Then she remembered another thing.

"Did you tell the young man Cousin John wants to live to be a hundred?"

"You see, her memory is going," Miss Lydia explained in an aside. "Yes, mother, I told him."

"Does she want to live to be a hundred?" asked the young man from the *News*.

Miss Lydia with patience: "The young man wants to know whether you'd like to live to be a hundred, mother."

"Whether I'd like to live to be a hundred? Well, I don't know. I guess I want to live to be as old as I live to be and no more." Pleased with this repartee, she went into a giggling fit. Miss Lydia led her away, the old woman throwing a parting shot, like an irrepressible parrot:

"Mind you tell him facts, not fancies."

Both the Misses Moderwell had got into the way of treating their mother with a sort of worn-out patience. They found it hard to see why she could not have retained her full mental activity. Many old folks did. Of course she could be controlled, but in the presence of strangers her lapses of memory and her fits of laughter were embarrassing. She grew a little more childish each year. Miss Lydia and Miss Jane did not like to think how they would man-

age when her mind gave way entirely—if indeed she lived on. It was not like caring for Uncle John, who was "such a clever old man," as the nurse said, and who had the wherewithal to be generous.

On the yearly gala day, therefore, they brought their mother down only for a second when Cousin John cut his birthday cake and then led her gently upstairs to her bedroom.

The tiny parlor and the dining-room leading from it were crowded on this, his ninety-eighth birthday, with neighbors, a committee of congratulating citizens, a committee of congratulating alumni. Now and then one of the less important of these would stagger out to the bare front porch and swing back and forth in the cane rocking-chair preparatory to slipping away unnoticed.

Inside, the committees had grouped themselves about the old man's couch, at either end of which stood Miss Lydia and the nurse in attitudes of eager attendance. Out of the old man's face, fixed as a mask, peered his two eyes straight ahead. He might have been alone for all the cognizance he could take of his visitors, but because he kept his eyes open all the time, Miss Lydia and his nurse knew that he was pleased and attentive.

The chairman of the committee of citizens made a short speech as loudly as he could, but his rather gruff, even voice did not penetrate the old man's ears. Miss Lydia bent down to the pillow and summed it up shrilly for his benefit.

"Cousin John, the gentleman says he hopes to be offering you congratulations on your hundredth birthday."

The chairman of the committee of alumni made an equally short speech.

"Cousin John, the gentleman says you're an honor to the college and he hopes he'll be here to boast of you on your hundredth birthday."

Faint tremors ran along the nonagenarian body as Cousin John was seized with some inner emotion.

Miss Lydia leaned over and extricated the few words that came from between his lips.

"He says, 'Thank you all.'"

Then came the ceremony of cutting the cake. With infinite precautions, Cousin John was lifted to a sitting level and supported with pillows, while Miss Jane brought in the enormous birthday cake. It did not have a third enough candles, of course, but just enough for the nurse to expand her chest mightily before she blew them out. Then, while she guided his hand, Cousin John sliced the cake in half.

By this time, however, he panted hard. He had overexerted himself, so he had to be laid carefully back on the pillows, while Miss Jane cut the cake into sections, wrapped each neatly in wax paper, placed it in a small box and handed it to one of the committeemen. It was succulent cake and would be appreciated by their wives and children. Pocketing this souvenir, each committeeman accepted his hat from Miss Lydia and prepared to go.

"Keeps his faculties remarkably," each confided to Miss Lydia. "*Remarkably*. Not the least doubt he'll see a hundred—maybe more. Well, thanks for the cake."

When the last man filed out, Cousin John, querulous and shivering from the excitement, was carried upstairs. Miss Lydia and Miss Jane began to clean up. They, too, felt a little weary, now importance had departed for another year. Another year of dreary waiting—another birthday. And then another year of watching the old man descend inch by inch into the grave, and then another birthday.

They had no doubt whatever that he would live to be a hundred, perhaps more, as the committeemen said. They were resigned. Only after each birthday they had this sick feeling of half-exhausted hope. Miss Jane had just received a letter from an old schoolmate who was traveling around the world and she envied her. Miss Lydia had been reading of a woman who had made a fortune in Chicago with a cafeteria. They did not like to follow up their thoughts. It was not right even to dream of what they could do or see with the money of Cousin John that was

fighting so staunchly for its owner against odds as sure as death.

After clearing away the debris of the festivity, Miss Lydia went to bring up a cup of tea and a piece of birthday cake to the nurse and to ask dutifully how Cousin John felt.

"Sh—he's peaceful now," said the nurse, finger on lip, as she appeared at the half-open door. "But he's had a bit of pain. I think maybe I ought to call up the doctor."

That night the nurse and the doctor looked anxious and tension was high among the Moderwells. All next day Cousin John struggled with his breath in subdued fashion—in a whisper, so to speak. Toward evening, as he lay on his big bed, so unbelievably thin and wan and shriveled, he missed one breath, then two, then three, and he never breathed again. A day after his ninety-eighth birthday John Durbar was dead.

"His end," said Miss Lydia, calling up the local paper, "was perfectly peaceful. We are thankful for that."

IV

It would not be fair to the Moderwells to describe the calm of their household after Cousin John's death as peaceful. Rather the dense watchfulness of the air before a storm had given way to the clear tranquillity of its recession. Cousin John's lawyer had visited them. He had treated them with a tentative deference that included old Mrs. Moderwell so accustomed to disregard, had asked after her health, been pleased to hear that it was very good.

He had even joked.

"Ah, yes, Mr. Durbar always boasted you and he came of a long-lived family."

He had offered to handle the details of the funeral. A most cordial man. They could not but believe that Cousin John had treated them very kindly in his will—perhaps even left them everything. Certainly he had no other relatives.

Cousin John's affairs, it seemed, were all in the best order, had been in the best order for many years, awaiting his

death. Not so long after the funeral, therefore, Miss Lydia and Miss Jane, in a great state of tremble, made ready in the parlor to listen to the reading of the will. The lawyer looked at them queerly over his reading glasses and then roundabout.

"And where is Mrs. Moderwell?" he asked.

"Oh, mother," said Miss Lydia disapprovingly. "Why, mother's upstairs—resting. Is it necessary—"

"Well, yes—in a way," answered the lawyer.

He continued to look at them in cryptic fashion over his glasses.

"Mother," called Miss Lydia, then, as Miss Jane made to rise—"Never mind, Jane. She'll get down alone. Mother, here's Mr. Woods wants you to come down."

"Yes, yes, what say?" The old lady had been standing at the head of the stairs, hoping against hope for such a summons.

"Come downstairs, mother," cried Miss Lydia with a more impatient stress.

They heard old Mrs. Moderwell fumbling down, one step at a time, clutching the bannister. She arrived out of breath, her cap askew, her little eyes very bright and happy to be included.

"What's that? What say?" she demanded.

"Sit right down, mother," commanded Miss Lydia. "Mr. Woods is going to read the will."

"It's a very short will," said Mr. Woods, raising his voice and confining his attention to the old lady.

She nodded spryly to show she had heard.

He hemmed and hawed with gusto—and began.

It was a short will. Law phrases to the effect that the estate amounted to about three hundred thousand dollars. A tiny bequest to the nurse. Then—

"The income from the residue of my estate I leave to my dear cousin, Ann Durbar Moderwell, for the remainder of her life."

There was an inaudible gasp. The lawyer raised his hand. More law phrases.

"If my cousin, Ann Moderwell, should live to celebrate her hundredth birthday, then, at her demise, half the income from the residue of my estate is to go to my cousin, Lydia Moderwell, and the other half to my cousin, Jane Moderwell, should they both survive Ann Moderwell. If one survives, the total income shall go to that one. If neither survives, the residue of my estate shall pass to my alma mater, Haworth College.

"If, however, my cousin, Ann Moderwell, should die before her hundredth birthday, her two daughters, Jane and Lydia Moderwell, shall each be given \$1,000 from my estate, and the residue shall go to Haworth College."

More law phrases appointing the lawyer as trustee, providing against contest of the will.

"That's the end," said the lawyer, pulling off his glasses.

He began to stuff papers into his portfolio.

"Mr. Durbar," he commented with a half smile, "was always a great hand for jokers."

Miss Lydia and Miss Jane guarded a stunned silence.

"I heard every word of that will," beamed Mrs. Moderwell complacently. "Now, isn't that a fine will? Cousin John always was a handsome man. Oh, my, yes, I remember he was a very handsome young man."

"Yes, mother," said Miss Lydia, suddenly rousing herself. "You mustn't excite yourself. Do you"—she turned to the lawyer—"don't you think she should have a nurse?"

"Why, perhaps—" The lawyer was diplomatic. "She seems to be very well. Let's see, she's eighty-eight, eh—?"

He stopped. The same thought was in the minds of both: that twelve years is a hazardously long time in an old woman's life.

"I'll get a new bunnet," called the old lady, struggling to rise. "A new bunnet. What say, Lydia?"

"Yes, mother. Now do sit still. You must rest. No, you can't go upstairs. It's bad for the heart. Do sit still. Jane, you telephone for Cousin John's nurse."

The lawyer made his adieux. Going down the porch steps, he happened to turn his head and see into the parlor windows. Miss Lydia was settling the

old woman in the rocking chair with Cousin John's pillows about her. Miss Jane was telephoning for Cousin John's nurse. The Moderwell household had settled into its previous state of apprehensive waiting. Twelve years to the desperately hoped-for hundredth birthday—and twelve years is a hazardously long time in an old woman's life.



Pagan

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

*MEN with mournful faces
Preach that joy is sin—
While through chapel windows
Sunlight dances in.*

*Life's a doubtful journey,
Joy is hard to find
Drifting on the sunlight,
Whispering in the wind.*

*All the mournful hymn-tunes
Of misguided good
Will not change the thrushes
In the shadowed wood.*

*All the shouted dogmas
Still leave misery—
And the clear streams singing
Onward to the sea.*



THERE are three stages in the average man's aspirations. The first, when he believes that one woman is better than another. The second, when he believes that one woman is as good as another. And the third, when he believes that one woman is better than none at all.



Bacheloria

By Charles G. Shaw

I

THE woman who kisses with her eyes open is comparable to the man who kisses with his mouth closed.

II

Beware of the woman who tells you of her love for her husband. Then beware of the husband.

III

A friend: the cause, nine times in ten, of the disruption of a love affair.

IV

It is not the witty fellow, nor the profound one, nor yet the practical one that necessarily ensnares a woman. It is merely the man who squeezes her hand at the proper moment and, gazing into her eyes with all the sincerity in the universe, tells her what she longs most to hear.

V

The threshold of sensation in a man's life is heightened by such factors as glamor, beauty, gaiety, adventure. . . . In a woman's life it is man that is the sole necessary factor.

VI

Women are jealous for two reasons: because they hate a woman and because they love a man.

VII

It is quite as absurd to attempt to analyze the cause of a woman's hatred as it is to attempt to analyze the depth of a woman's love.

VIII

A man marries very largely for the same reason that a woman does. The chief distinction to be drawn in the case of a man is that none of the reasons is as vital to him.

IX

How suddenly can an *affair d'amour* explode! Let the woman mention, with a light of thrill in her eyes and a tremor in her voice, the name of a former suitor, a current rival, an intimate beau, her husband. . . .

X

When a man becomes a necessity to a woman, the woman becomes a nuisance to the man.

XI

The belief that the separation of two lovers induces a sensation of heightened love on the part of each is assuredly an unsound one. What actually occurs in the case of such a separation is merely a failure to bring to mind those qualities that are most objectionable in each and, coincidentally, a touching up of those exposed spots with the tinsel known as imagination.

XII

Love is a contest that requires two entries. The winner has the privilege of peacefully submitting to the loser.

XIII

The suitor who continually appears in quest of the lady's hand, after being repeatedly instructed that his presence wearies her, must surely be a fellow of the shoddiest calibre. What first-rate man will enter the back of the house when he has just been ejected from the front? And yet is not that precisely the *modus operandi* employed by half the gallant knights that grace the pages of romantic literature?

XIV

Women marry and are forgiven; men marry and are forgotten.

XV

There are two methods by which a man conquers a woman: (1) by utter strength and (2) by brute indifference.

XVI

Men are bemused by the great things in life: industry, government, finance, power. . . . Women are bemused by the small ones: daintiness, amusement, luxury, men. . . .



THE only perfect love: that which a man over forty had when he was under twenty.



ONE woman's hell is generally another woman's paradise.



XVII

Nothing is so fatal to a love affair as a superabundance of imagination in the woman and a lack of it in the man.

XVIII

In the conquest of a woman a man congratulates himself on those devices of technique which were precisely the ones that repelled the woman to such a degree that the conquest was very nearly never achieved.

XIX

It is not the woman that raves and rants at the man, and vows that never again does she wish to behold him, who will successfully rid herself of his society. On the contrary, it is the woman who is wholly indifferent to whatever he may do or say.

XX

The man who admits that he is a fool over a woman is an even greater fool than he suspects. Surely a fellow may be forgiven for being deceived, but who will pardon that man who continues his amorous attentions knowing full well that he is still being deceived?

XXI

No woman has much respect for the man who has too much respect for her.

One of the Free

By Maude Parker

I

SHE must wait until after breakfast. Then she could be alone.

Until that time she must not think of it. She could not eat, but the three small children of her hungry brood did not notice that. They were accustomed to her low-voiced inquiries about more cereal and too-hot milk and her insistence that toast must be broken before it was buttered.

"Not so fast, Brother, not so fast!"

Even as she knew that she had lost that which had once counted most in her own fabric of life, her mother-self was aware that Brother, who was five, was gulping down his prunes.

"I don't wanta miss the bus, mother," he said, his brown eyes wide open, his cheeks bulging.

"I wanta go in the bus, too," Edith wailed.

"You're too little!" Brother answered contemptuously.

Edith tried to cry.

"Oh, hush!" said Mother sharply.

At this unexpected impatience the little girl looked up. Then, remembering her intention, she leaned her bobbed yellow head upon a chubby hand which clutched a piece of bacon, and howled.

"Leave the table!" Mother commanded.

"I won't!"

"Leave the table!"

Mother rose from her chair.

Edith wailed, "I'm a good girl!"

"You'd better be!" Brother said.

Before she sat down again, Mother straightened the cushions in the low, upholstered chair in which Baby sat, munching dry toast and looking at them

with interested, unrevealing eyes. At his mother's proximity, he clutched the white collar of her dark serge dress, and jerked it hard.

"You mustn't tear my own mother's dress!" little Edith warned.

Mother touched Baby's smooth pink cheek. He grabbed her finger and tried to draw it into his toothless mouth.

"He's biting you!" Edith cried.

At this Mother put one hand firmly on her little daughter's shoulder. "I'm a good girl," she insisted quickly.

Mother sat down. She poured herself a cup of coffee, wondering numbly how much longer she could stand it. If only she could be alone! It was agony to sit there, administering to her young, while her heart broke. If only she could be alone!

The noise of an automobile horn outside caused Brother to slide down from his seat and run toward his coat and cap in the hall. He brought them in to Mother, and, when he was securely buttoned, turned his face up to be kissed.

She heard herself saying, "Good-bye, dear. Don't go out at recess without your coat!"

"No, muddie. Good-bye."

As he went out, Mrs. Haskins came in. Mrs. Haskins was an impecunious widow who took Baby and Edith out for their morning airing so that Mother might have leisure to order and market and mend and sew.

"I don't want to go out!" said little Edith. "I don't, muddie!"

Mother heard her own voice, maternally sharp:

"Well, it doesn't matter whether you want to or not. Get your coat, quickly! Now, Baby dear—"

She picked up the warm, soft little thing, kissing him on the top of his downy head. "Mrs. Haskins will wheel you out with Sister."

She worked quickly, desperately, as criminals work when they seek escape from imprisonment. In five minutes they were out in the winter sunshine.

But even now she was not free. She must finish everything.

"Anna! Anna!" she called.

The colored houseworker came slowly and rheumatically up from the basement. "Yas'm?"

"Is the list ready?"

"Yas'm—no'm—there ain't no list, but we needs flour and butter and eggs and baking powder—and whatever you want for vegetable."

"Flour and butter and eggs and baking powder. Sure that's all?"

"Yas'm. Oh, we're out of oranges for the children."

Mother counted them off on her fingers, as she seated herself before the telephone. Sometimes she went to market, but not today.

The line was busy.

While she was waiting, she remembered to call up the laundry. They had left the wrong bundle the day before. The girl at the other end said she'd look it up.

The grocery was still busy.

She called the butcher shop and ordered a soup bone and lamb chops. As she hung up the receiver Anna said, "An' bacon—an' maybe you better git a little pork—that new laundress is powerful fussy about her food."

Mother tried to call them back. Central reported at first that they did not answer; then that they were busy. She called the grocery, giving the order verbatim.

When she had hung up the receiver and was again endeavoring to get the butcher shop, Anna said, twisting one corner of her big blue and white checked apron,

"You didn't get no vegetable."

"Oh, Anna!"

"I told you. I told you. I said flour

and butter and eggs and we needs a vegetable."

"Oh, Anna, why didn't you tell me when I had the grocery—"Hello—hello."

Into the receiver, "How much is breakfast bacon?" . . . That was out of the way.

Anna was aggrieved. Mother was usually diplomatic.

"If I was let to do the ordering myself, same as I was used to when I worked for Mrs. Dr. Simonds—"

"Now, Anna, we can't go into that again. I intend to do my own ordering. If you'd make out a written list we'd have no difficulty."

Anna grinned. "We always needs a vegetable."

Mother, trying desperately to get the grocery again,

"Have you been upstairs yet?"

"Why, no'm. Why, it's just a little after nine. You'uns just finished breakfast!"

"Go into my room first. Don't bother to sweep it this morning. Just make the bed as quickly as you can and leave the windows open."

". . . Half a peck of spinach. And a small head of lettuce."

If only Anna would hurry! She must be alone, in her own room, with the door closed. She must shut out all this world of butchers and cooks and gulping prunes. She must have time, as a human being, not just as a mother, to face this hideous thing—this unbelievable, overwhelming thing.

She must not let herself go now.

II

SHE had not opened the rest of her mail. That first letter, that letter from her husband, from Ned, had paralyzed her. Ever since then she had been numb; she had acted and spoken only with her subconscious self, automatically.

While she was waiting, she opened the other envelopes. Eighty-five dollars for the doctor for Brother! Why, he hadn't come that many times. Let's see

—twice a day the first week, then once every day, then—oh, why hadn't she made a note of it—then she'd know accurately.

The next envelope was thicker, with neatly pinned samples of material for summer dresses. The yellow and white—just the thing for Edith, with her brown eyes and pink cheeks. Mother had worn yellow and white gingham, was it thousands of years ago, when she had been a young girl, a young separate individual person with no responsibility—no—

"I must telephone the seamstress," she said aloud.

She jotted down all that the seamstress told her. "'Three yards if it's twenty-seven inches; two and a quarter if it's forty.' Yes—next Monday. I'll order them today—'quarter of a yard of white for each collar and piping for the cuffs.' Yes—indeed."

A small envelope—four to six to meet Mrs. Alexander Abbott. What fun it would be to see Eleanor again! She hadn't seen her since commencement. Commencement! Mother, graduating from college with honors! Mother, who argued with black Anna and bickered with the iceman over sixty or seventy-five pounds. Four to six—just the time the babies were at their worst. Mrs. Haskins had returned to her own prim, childless apartment by that time. Four to six indeed!

She heard Anna come out of her room. Gathering up the letters and the morning paper, Mother went quickly up the steps, pausing at the top, a little breathless. She weighed so much more since this last baby—there seemed to be no time for good brisk exercise alone.

Now she was in her room. She put everything down on her desk, before she could lock the door.

Anna was cleaning the bathroom, singing out loudly:

*"With the cross of Je—sus,
Going on before."*

Mother could not think yet. She went into the nursery. The bedclothes must

be put into the sunlight to air. She lifted the mattress from Edith's bed. Her new Christmas doll with both hands off! Mother knew that she ought not to have let her have it.

She folded the blankets. They really ought to be washed. Would it be cheaper to have a woman come in or to send them to the laundry?

*"Like a mighty a-r-m-y
Moves the church of Gawd."*

She must not be irritated by Anna. It was splendid to hear her sing. Splendid that she was happy enough to sing!

At last Anna has completed the upstairs. She can close her door and turn the key.

*"Brothers, we are t-r-eading,
Where the saints have t-rod."*

The door locked, she opened the letter again.

"Oh, no!" she cried aloud.

But his words were just as she had remembered them: "It is for you to decide whether or not I will come back. But one thing you must bear firmly in mind—I do not intend to come back, if I come back, like a whipped dog. You are entirely free to take me or leave me. You have sometimes spoken as if you were not free. Let me tell you again that you are."

That she should even hesitate! It was this horrible disintegration of herself that broke her heart. She who, in the fine courage of her youth, had stood so uncompromisingly for truth, for faithfulness, for a family unit founded upon ideals.

Lying, unfaithful, cruelly dominating. The hideous treachery—letting her go on. And even while baby had been coming, Ned had—

"Oh, my God!"

She wanted to fling herself down on her bed. She wanted to burst into paroxysms of tears. She sat, immovable, at her desk, dry-eyed.

She had not minded any of it so much—being poor, with three babies, and

drifting, gradually, away from the contacts which seven years ago had meant everything to her. Now, on the rare occasions when she let him see the chasm between her actual life and the life she had dreamed, he always said to her, "We have each other."

But he was gone. Suppose she told him to come back. She could forget, in time; and even if at night, alert for sudden changes in the weather or the wakefulness of the babies, she would turn to his bed so near hers and hate him for his betrayal, he need never know. At least her thoughts were not his now.

No, it was not unfaithfulness to the body out of which their children had come that she could not forgive. It was that he had taken the promise of her youth and piled on it rock after rock—children that crushed her mere physical resistance, duties and drudgeries benumbing her mind.

That was it—letting her build her life, away from her own expressiveness, upon a fabricated trust in him.

The telephone. Ringing and ringing. Mother must rush down. It might be a telegram.

Breathless, holding up the receiver, to hear, "We've located the other package of laundry. Our driver will. . . ."

Telling Anna to have the bundle ready for him.

Upstairs again. Alone. Trying to focus all her thought upon a tiny point of light which began to flicker, to beckon, miles away through the darkness of her despair.

"Oh, Ned! Oh, Ned!"

Agony of loss.

Tearing the bandage off old memories—the dearness of him; his clumsy fin-

gers braiding her hair when she had been sick; the absurdly unbecoming hat she had worn a whole winter because he had bought it; the funny little presents he had brought to the hospital every day after Brother was born.

Back of that—the courting days, when, just out of college, she had gone forth so eager to match herself against the world, and he had captured her affections and made her change her dreams.

"I made up my mind to marry you the first moment I ever saw you," he had often told her.

Everything she had built upon for all these years. Gone.

What difference could it make whether his body came back and he sat at the table and slept in the white bed near her own?

The point of light grew brighter and flared for a moment to illuminate the whole black passageway.

She threw back her head and laughed aloud. . . .

She was still laughing when tiny hands knocked on the door.

"Mo-ther! We came in 'cause Mrs. Haskins says it's going to snow and Baby needs a hankiesnuff. Can I come into your room?"

She started to say, "No, dear. I want to be alone."

But the light that had shown her escape had not yet died out. She knew that now, thank God, no matter who or what was there, she would always be alone.

She answered the importuning little voice outside:

"Yes, come in! Just a minute. Don't cry! Mother's opening the door."



Chiaroscuro

By Victor Thaddeus

I

FROM the stringed-instrument department of the music store Mr. Harrison watched Miss Sinclair working at the record-filing cabinet. The white light of the lamp was on her as she moved; her face and throat shone like white marble that must be exquisitely smooth to the touch; her blonde hair formed a golden aureole about her head. Mr. Harrison was in the shadow. His fingers trembled as he plucked at the strings of a guitar.

He had purposely kept the girl working overtime, yet now that they were alone together he felt strangely impotent. The vibrations of the guitar strings seemed to linger in his body, troubling his throat. She was so young and beautiful. He put down the guitar and leaned upon the showcase, feasting his eyes on her loveliness.

The glass broke through with a crash. Mr. Harrison gave a cry of pain. Miss Sinclair, stooping with her back to him, turned and ran to his side, inquiring breathlessly:

"What happened? Are you hurt, Mr. Harrison?"

Mr. Harrison felt the anxiety in her eyes touch him like a caress. The thought came to him that he had only to put out his arms to take hold of her—she was so close to him now. In the shadow, she seemed to have acquired a soft, translucent radiance. He was about to seize her in his arms when he noticed blood dripping from his fingers to the floor.

Alternate waves of intense light and profound shadow blurred his vision. They shut the store from his eyes.

Their motion accelerated until they had become an impenetrable barrier racing with vertiginous swiftness. From beyond this barrier came the voice of Miss Sinclair, consoling, commanding. . . .

Dimly he realized that she had led him to a chair, and that he was sitting with his face in his hands, a spineless, miserable creature with a cold, damp body.

Innumerable tiny waves lapped at his eyeballs. From blinding heights he tumbled into black abysses. If he could only keep himself from attempting to follow the motion of this alternate light and shadow he was sure that the nausea would leave him; but he was unable to do this. A feeble bitterness possessed him also; bitterness at the sovereign power of pain over him—pain, and fear of blood, that snatched away the golden moments of life.

All at once he began to feel better. Miss Sinclair had finished bandaging his hand. He became aware of her face, quite close to his, regarding him with sweet, sympathetic eyes.

Pulling himself together, he muttered a confused thanks and walked quickly to the rear of the store. His appearance in the mirror shocked him. His hair was disheveled, his face was streaked with blood where he had touched it, and the lines about his eyes and mouth, and upon his forehead, seemed to hold black, poisonous shadows tightly against the white skin.

He stared at himself. It was obvious that he could never win the love of Miss Sinclair; she was too young and beautiful, while he was past forty and looked even older.

But, after he had washed his face

with cold water, had combed his hair carefully and smoothed his tie, he saw the matter in a different light. The color had returned to his cheeks. He noticed approvingly his square shoulders and erect carriage. After all, he was a big, strong man in the prime of life, and the gray hairs over his ears were barely noticeable. As he re-entered the store he heard the sound of music.

Miss Sinclair was inside one of the phonograph booths. She had just completed the adjustment of the needle, and was still leaning over the machine. She did not hear him enter the booth.

Suddenly she turned and found him there.

"Oh, Mr. Harrison!" she exclaimed. "I thought I'd play some music for you," she added, recovering from her surprise, "to make you feel better. Music often has that effect. Lucky you didn't cut yourself worse."

"Yes, it was fortunate," agreed Mr. Harrison. "I shouldn't have been so careless, especially as I've frequently warned others about leaning on the display cases. But. . . ."

Miss Sinclair's eyes were shining. Never had he seen her so radiant. She stood with her hands clasped, staring beyond him with rapt, wistful eyes. Kreisler was playing his *Caprice Viennois*. To Mr. Harrison the song of the violin seemed to be the song of his own soul yearning for this beautiful girl.

"I had a reason," he said fiercely. "I didn't even know I was leaning on the display case. I didn't know what I was doing. All I knew was that I was looking at you, watching your dear face, longing for you as I've never longed for any woman in my life!" He caught her by the shoulders, and tried to draw her toward him.

The girl sprang away from him, crouching into the corner of the booth. She was panting. The violin played on, and seemed to be panting also. He noticed her little clenched fists.

"I love you, Alice! I love you!" he cried passionately. "I've loved you ever since that blessed day three months ago when you came in and asked me for a

job. I'll never stop loving you. Come away with me. I'll sell out, and we'll leave the country. Go to some beautiful place where they never have any winters, a place of sunshine and roses and real happiness. An island somewhere—Hawaii—!"

"You're crazy, Mr. Harrison!" said Miss Sinclair. "You don't know what you're saying."

He felt that she was trying to put anger and contempt into her voice. But, triumphantly, he realized that she had failed in this. Her voice sang to him, warm with young life, red as her lips.

He took a step toward her.

"I'm not crazy! I—!"

Quick as a flash she tried to dart past him and out of the booth. But he had guessed her intention. Catching hold of her, he imprisoned her arms. Wild, rebellious love, shy as a young fawn! Exulting in his superior strength he lifted her face. The table fell with a crash. And suddenly the music ceased.

At the same time Mr. Harrison became afraid of the two eyes looking up at him. Shuffling of feet and their own heavy breathing were all that he heard now. From the street came the dull, ominous rumbling of traffic. It sounded like a murder being committed. He released his hold on the girl and sat down.

She stood looking at him. He shivered under her glance. He saw it pass to his hand. The white bandage was spotted with red.

"I understand now why you asked me to work overtime tonight, Mr. Harrison," she said, in a clear, cold voice. "Was *that* part of the frame-up?"

Now she was standing outside the booth. She turned.

"It may interest you to know that I happen to be in love myself, and expect to be married next month—Mr. Harrison!"

He heard her walking down the aisle, heard the door open and shut again.

Mechanically, he stooped and lifted the table. Fragments of broken records, that had fallen with it, littered the floor. One of her hairpins lay at his

feet. While he twisted the metal between his fingers his thoughts tortured him with introspection.

"Three months ago she came into your life," they said. "Now she has gone out of it forever."

He leaned his head against the partition. She had never called him Jack, never would—as he had called her Alice. Her cold, clear voice crying his surname had been like the white light of the tungsten before his eyes, casting black and terrible shadows. And the air, that a moment before had sparkled with music like a jewel of a thousand facets, exhilarating his soul, was now inert.

He tried to understand what it was that was the matter with life—why things never turned out right. The phonograph was scratching away on the rim of the disk. He shut it off.

II

WHEN he stepped into a cigar store to telephone it was hard for him to hold himself in control, and to explain in a matter-of-fact voice that he was unavoidably detained by business. The booth seemed unbearably hot. He came out wiping his face. He walked with his hat in his hand, crumpling the felt.

The shops passed, flashing their window displays. He walked on. Houses and trees. Then trees alone. Trees with Jameson Creek winding in and out, coiling like a snake, running with little ripples. He stood on a footbridge staring down at the water. He was not conscious of the fading light until he noticed a star near the left bank, shining brightly, steadily, undisturbed by the smooth movement of the stream.

He looked up, and saw the star shining in the sky. The evening star, perhaps. And, away from the town, far away, a golden glow upon the horizon marked the rising of the moon.

The day was over, and night had come. Mr. Harrison, clutching the cold wall of the bridge, felt a fury mounting within him against this inevitable antithesis that seemed to be inherent in the

very essence of things. Night and day, heaven and hell, love and hate. Where was the fair, sweet land of dreams, where a man might do great deeds and be rewarded in a fitting manner? Was there no such place—none anywhere throughout the universe? In the whole wide world was there no escape from these crushing, rending contrasts?

No, there was none. Death was imbedded in the very germ of life. He felt this to be the truth. He knew it *was* the truth; that only for the unborn and the dead were there no differences. But he rebelled against this knowledge. Alice, dear Alice!—he would *make* her love him. He would do something wonderful, something that would change the world for both of them, something that would make the inexorable order of things give way before the peculiar circumstances of one man and one woman.

Something! What? Suddenly a full realization of his utter impotence came to him with overwhelming significance. His tense limbs relaxed into flaccid abandon and subjection. He leaned heavily against the wall.

Behind him a deep-throated cry rose to a shrill diabolical shriek, and died away again. The fire siren. He smiled cynically. Let the fire burn. Let it burn like hell. He would go and watch. The firemen would play water upon it. Fire and water. And someone would probably be killed if it was a real fire.

But, despite himself, when the siren began straining toward its crescendo again, it seemed to clutch at his nerves. Involuntarily he quickened his pace. From all around came the noise of running feet. Three men, running abreast of one another, pushed him off the sidewalk. A black shape loomed ahead of him, and he recognized his own house silhouetted against the sky; passing, he saw the flames suddenly, puffing like an immense flare.

The fire was nearby, at the foot of the hill. He stood on the height watching it through half-shut eyes. Small black shapes darted across patches of red light and opaque shadow. The clang of engine bells, shouts, shriller cries, came up

to him in clamorous disorder. Now the water was turned on, and he heard the fierce sibilance of liberated steam. Over all soared the voice of the siren.

He stared and listened. The spectacle seemed to satisfy cruel obscure desires. It was both monstrous and beautiful like a holocaust to gods hidden by the darkness.

Somewhere across the street a voice said, "The Churchill Apartments!"

Mr. Harrison lurched forward, a ringing in his ears, his breath snatched away. Miss Sinclair had moved into the Churchill Apartments the first of the month. She was staying there with her mother. But he remembered her having remarked to him that morning that her mother was in Cincinnati now, visiting relatives.

He began to run down the hill.

He did not see the street before him. His eyes were fixed upon the burning building. As he ran, the spectacular scene seemed to madden his senses, so that he felt as though taking huge strides and hurling aside obstacles, while the air, racing past, roared in his ears. He was running among the houses of a red town, over which hung a red sky. Town and sky had assumed stupendous heroic proportions.

If Miss Sinclair had gone straight to the apartment house from the store, which was probable! If something had happened to her so that she was trapped inside the building—!

"Alice is caught!" shouted the red town. "Burnt alive!" bawled the red sky.

A ladder truck swept around the corner, and the end of the ladder, protruding beyond the rear carriage, brushed him into the gutter. He picked himself up and ran on, scarcely feeling the blow. But now he seemed to be shouting to himself. "Alice! My God, Alice!"

He broke through the crowd. A policeman, shouting furiously, and waving a club, knocked him back. People everywhere were shielding their faces from the heat of the flames. Mr. Harrison staggered and fell. From his prostrate position he looked up and saw

Miss Sinclair at a fourth floor window.

Voices yelled information back and forth. The staircase was on fire. The fire had started in the well of the elevator shaft, and the fire escapes had collapsed under an overload of tenants struggling frantically to escape. A woman was trapped on the fourth floor.

Mr. Harrison sprang to his feet, and rushed forward. The policeman hurled him back again. Now he had become an object of attention to the crowd.

He snarled like a beast—gesticulated toward the windows.

"Let me go!—damn you!—think I'm going to stand here and watch her burn?"

"They'll get her!" yelled back the officer. "The firemen'll get her. That's—their—job!"

In the scuffle Mr. Harrison's coat was ripped from his back. The people around him gave way, afraid of his face. When someone tried to console him, telling him to keep calm, that everything would turn out all right, that the fire department was doing fine work, he struck the man on the head with his fist. Two men helped the officer to hold him.

"Just you keep quiet," said the policeman. "Just you keep quiet, friend. That's the most you can do."

Mr. Harrison tried to break loose. The grips tightened. He could not move. He began to shake from head to foot in his impotence, and sweat streamed from his face. There was Alice leaning out, her hair red, her glorious golden hair, her white face and neck, so smooth and beautiful—all red, red, red!

A ladder was being raised again. The first had crashed down when flames and smoke had suddenly poured into the street from the lower windows, and two firemen had been killed. Firemen rushed about in their glistening helmets, wielding axes. Around Mr. Harrison the explanations continued. That girl could not leave her room. The corridor was full of hot smoke. The landing had caught. She was in a bad way. But the fire department would rescue her.

That last fire on Elsworth Street had taught it a whole lot.

A fireman started up the ladder. He was on a level with the third floor windows when a terrific roar bellowed its way to the street. At the same moment dense volumes of smoke poured from the lower openings of the building. The confined gas, heated to ignition temperature, had exploded in the corridors. The crowd fell back before the suffocating fumes. Mr. Harrison was forgotten. When the smoke cleared away he found himself standing alone.

The ladder was still standing. Miss Sinclair had disappeared. The fireman lay at the foot of the ladder. Mr. Harrison felt his impotence fall away from him. His chance had come at last. He was free to act. He rushed forward.

As he scaled the ladder, a balcony tore loose from its supports and swung vertically like the skeleton of a massive pendulum, and a child somewhere in the crowd screamed shrilly with mingled fear and delight.

Miss Sinclair had fainted, and lay on the floor near the window. He lifted her in his arms, and threw her body diagonally across his shoulder. He swung back to the ladder.

He knew that all eyes were upon him as he made his descent. He heard the roaring of the crowd and shivered. Infinite courage and strength seemed to have entered him. From the ladder he had glimpses of the street below—visions of a mighty city swarming with strange peoples and bright with many lights.

He reached the ground, and moved with great strides, a man in a daze, yet certain of his steps. The crowd pressed about him, yelling, trying to touch him, to take his hands. He had become a hero. He knelt down supporting the girl's head upon his knee.

The light of the fire was on her face. She lay there beautiful as a goddess, her golden hair falling down her back. He knew that this was the supreme moment of his life. He stooped and covered her face with kisses.

Dimly he heard the crowd cheering. Cheering for him. All these alien souls. He seemed to be expanding—expanding with an immense sympathy, an overwhelming love. And, suddenly, out of nowhere, a phrase came ringing through his mind. *There were giants on the earth in those days.*

In those days. The days were now. He felt himself a giant, vast—omnipotent. A giant to whom nothing in the world mattered but Alice, Alice against whose warm lips his own were now pressed, Alice who must be his forever, and ever, and ever.

He raised his head, and stared ahead in an unseeing ecstasy. Slowly his eyes focused. Slowly a cold horror crept with paralytic certainty through his limbs and soul. He was looking at a woman. A woman who held a child by the hand—the child that had screamed—and watched him from the shadow. A woman who watched him silently, whose face was not golden, but cold, and gray, and miserable. His wife.



WHEN a man embarks on a love affair he wants it to be an excursion—while a woman always wants to make it a round trip.



A WOMAN spends years forcing a man to say "no"—and then never forgives him for it.

The Butcher

By Carol Dodge

I

HE was Kroner's John to us when we had just started first grade: a long, stocky, red-headed boy with thick square hands backed with coarse reddish hair. They were strong hands that grabbed us roughly when we splashed mud puddles in front of the meat market after school. "Hey, you brats, get the hell out of there." His father was only a butcher, and Grandma, with whom I had lived since my father died, owned more land than anybody else in Arcadia, and yet I always shivered when that big voice yelled at me. I was afraid of him, I guess; all of us were. Even his teachers never stood up to him. He quit school when he was fourteen because, as old man Kroner said, he wasn't smart at books and he was smart in the slaughter house. Every Wednesday morning John drove by our house, his head stuck high in the air with his importance, and the poor pigs squealing in the back of the wagon.

He got to be a pretty good judge of meat, and his father let him do most of the buying around the country. He was about nineteen, I guess, when Lulu Cypert had her baby. He was plain John now and the sign on the market window was "H. Kroner & Son." He went to the Rapids every two or three months and played ball Sundays with the Upper Michigan Nine, but outside of that he didn't go out much and he didn't spend his time hanging around saloons. Whether you liked the

Kroners or not, people said, you had to admit they stuck right to their knitting and they had the best market in town.

The Cyperts were a shiftless enough lot. Even Lulu, who trudged through three miles of heavy sand in the summer to get to church and worked for her board in the winter-time to go to school, was too pretty to last. She was the only housekeeper in the lot, which is why, I suppose, old man Cypert was willing to let her stay on after the baby came. There were nine of them, though, and they were all pretty mean about the baby, so Lulu picked up and came into town. Grandma took her as an extra hired girl and the baby, a quiet, shrinking little thing that everyone said 'twould be a blessing if it died, came with her. The baby didn't make any trouble, and even Aunt Gertie, who always had something to say about everybody, had to admit that Lulu was a great hand with children. I tagged at her heels all day long, and while she cooked supper she often let me slip up to her room to play with the baby. It was one of those times that I found a thin bunch of postcards tied with blue ribbon lying on her dresser. The top one was a picture of the Park Pavilion at the Rapids with the light on the water and people dancing and on the back it said, "Wish you was here with me, sweetie. Love and ***. John." I wondered if that was why she called the baby John. It was the winter after that that Lulu was blackballed when she tried to get into the

Rebekahs, and Delia Clover took poison.

II

SCHOOL had just let out and we were straggling along Main Street when Gladys Heffelfinger came running up and squeaked, "Delia Clover's took poison. She's in Doc Webster's office."

We all chased down the street to Doc Webster's, and because I was tallest they balanced me on one of Gardner's ice cream cans and I peeked over the white sash curtains. The office was empty, but there on the table in a mess of old newspapers was Delia's hat and the little squirrel neck-piece Art Webster had brought back to her from Canada. "He's got her in back, I guess," I whispered down, and just then Art Webster opened the door, his face as hard and set as granite. "Chase yourselves. If I catch you around here again I'll tan you to a fare-you-well." He looked as mean as John—but different.

The rest of the girls went flying down the street but I scrambled off the can and went into Gardner's to buy a soda. There was quite a crowd of people standing around in there who didn't want to be seen hanging around in front. I stayed for a while listening to the talk and trying to drink my soda until my head got dizzy and then I slid off the stool and started home.

"She walked right into the post-office as bright as you please with Goldie Updyke, and all of a sudden she turned to Goldie and said, 'I took poison a while ago.'"

I kept thinking about that all the way home: "walked into the post-office as bright as you please." She wasn't much bigger than a minute and as weak as water, and Aunt Gertie always said spitefully it was a good thing it didn't need brains to be a telephone operator. "Bright as you please." Yes, she was that. I remember how she'd let me watch the

switchboard while she stood in the doorway talking to Art Webster. I felt pretty sick by the time I got home. Poor old Mrs. Clover! Delia was all she had.

III

THINGS were quiet at supper that night and I went upstairs right afterward. About ten o'clock I came creeping downstairs for a drink of water, balancing on each step so as not to disturb Grandma, when I heard Lulu talking. Her voice was high and unnatural, the way Crazy Mary talked after one of her fits. Grandma was sitting in front of the sitting room heater rocking back and forth and Lulu was leaning against the table, her hands pressed tight against it.

"The poor little fool, the last thing she said was 'Sing Nearer My God to Thee.' Nearer My God to Thee—well, she was lucky to die believing there was a God. Oh, Mrs. Bates," and Lulu began to wring her hands, "I got to get away from here. I'll go crazy. Carl Olson wants to marry me and go to the Rapids. He says he can get a job firing on the Pere Marquette, and he'd be pretty good support even if he is a Swede. This ain't no way to bring up a kid, he'll never have a chance here. Honest, sometimes I think I just oughta dress up that baby and shove him at that damned old Kroner and say 'here—this belongs to your son'."

I crept back upstairs and didn't go to sleep for a long time. Everything seemed pretty ugly just then.

IV

TALK died down after a few days. John went to the Rapids for a couple of weeks and old lady Clover ordered a tombstone with the money she'd set aside for Delia's wedding. Art went down to Pontiac to work and Mrs. Clover and the Websters started getting their meat at The

Square Deal. There were plenty of people who would have done the same only you couldn't get around the fact that Kroner sold the best cuts and didn't charge any more. When John got back from the Rapids he gave up the baseball team and put on a little more weight, but for the rest he went right about his business as though nothing had happened. He already was a better butcher than the old man.

V

WE moved to Pleasantville right after that, and it wasn't until I'd finished Normal that I went back to Arcadia to visit. That was the summer Lulu Cypert died of consumption and her boy came back to live on the

farm. On Saturdays you could usually see him scurrying through the streets doing the week's trading: a thin, big-eyed little fellow not much more than skin and bones. He'll probably go like Lulu one of these days. Old man Kroner had died a couple of years back and John had painted the front, put up a new sign, and enlarged the slaughter house. He'd married, too, a girl from the Rapids, hard-headed and sensible, people said. I often saw them in the evening on my way to the cemetery with old Mrs. Clover—John, his red-headed wife and their red-headed baby. They say John will probably be Village President next year. Well, no matter what you say about him, he's stuck right to his knitting and he's a smart butcher.



Impressions—After The Japanese

By Henri Celestina Cooper

I

*WE have watched young leaves against the sunset.
And I am glad,
For ever now I can watch young leaves against the sunset
And think of you.*

II

*A star is gleaming outside my window,
A very steady star with a message.
It wants to tell me that it soon must die
Because you have gathered all its light
Within your eyes.*



The Goof

By Frank Pease

I

WHENEVER the Rev. Gabriel Bronson was called upon to do some hard thinking, that operation was invariably preceded by a series of slight but quite formal movements. Though nothing in themselves, yet performed with provoking deliberation and always the same, they had the vexatious precision and immoderate complacency which some people achieve in their commonest acts. At such times his manner, always subdued, was especially quiet, so restrained indeed as to convey an impression, slight but indisputable, of almost feline caution. Under the stress of hard thinking his movements, at least in sight of the profane, might have seemed tinged with the apprehensive gravity of officialdom; but in the eyes of the faithful, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson's every gesture was invested with the pontifical temper of absolute sanity.

Just now he was called upon to do some hard thinking. Indicating this was the cautious, almost furtive manner with which he slid one hand far back in a top drawer of the large desk behind which he sat. Fumbling for a moment, but for only a moment, perhaps a few seconds shy of the moment, he finally fetched forth some small white unidentified object. This was kept carefully concealed within the closed fingers of a large soft hand. After a few false starts which had the appearance, but only the appearance, of being absent-minded, and during which whatever he held was smoothed carefully, rubbed softly, caressed fondly as one might a morsel of some forbidden fruit, that

unknown object was quickly raised to his lips.

As coins vanish with abrupt finality into the orifice of slot machines, so did the mysterious object removed from the top drawer vanish. A rift in the brown beard cut round like an eye-shade, a flash of teeth too meticulously white to be genuine, a half-concealed glimpse of lips that would, one felt, in a moment more be smacked, but never were, and into the slightly opened mouth of the Rev. Gabriel Bronson something disappeared.

For some time thereafter the brown beard rose and fell with the ruminative rhythm of a fan waved leisurely. It was a slow breathlike movement so steadily gauged as to produce an impression of operating by itself, of being detached from and independent of the face behind. Rising and falling with provocative regularity, it alternately exposed and concealed a single black button, the third button, sole spot of color in a shirtfront shaped like an inverted tombstone which, hard and glossy cold as that irrefutable emblem, rose in a pallid shaft between the black waistcoat and the brown beard's obscure origin. Above this, with a bizarre effect as of perching upon the tombstone, two round panes of heavy horn-rimmed spectacles gleamed like the eyes of an owl. Owl-ish, too, as though it were the swaying of that lugubrious bird poising in perpetual readiness for flight, was the brown beard's contemplative rise and fall. But once this movement, last in the series, ended, a calm complacency came upon that portion of the Rev. Gabriel Bronson's face not hidden by

the redoubtable and owlish mask. Unquestionably expedited, as might be noted by critical observers, had there been such, which there never were, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson's hard thinking could now proceed. The Ritual of the Lozenge, a peppermint lozenge, was now a *fait accompli*.

Thus fortified the Rev. Gabriel Bronson could face, indeed, had often faced the world, picking his way with chaste prudence amidst its oscillating uncertainties for good and evil, unraveling many a riddle, settling many a problem, reaching many a firm decision. Under the discreetly tempered stimulus of peppermint lozenges, achieving with careful steps precisely what he set out to achieve, he had climbed upward in this great institution until he had become what he now was, its president. Peppermint lozenges had been of utmost assistance, aiding him in many a crisis, both in the affairs of his own mind and in the equally well-disciplined affairs of this vast organization over which he presided with unequivocal sagacity.

Indeed, so potent an influence through the long years of his struggle upward had peppermint lozenges been, especially in helping him introduce the latest efficiency methods in his administration, thus placing it at the very forefront of modernity, that one might say the institution now rested upon a substantial foundation of peppermint lozenges.

When it is known that this institution which the Rev. Gabriel Bronson headed—controlled “in the hollow of his hand,” as he put it, though sharing, at least in public, part of this high honor with Him who notes whence and why the sparrow falls—was none other than that vast machinery maintained by a Protestant sect for elevating benighted heathendom to the stellar clarity of the Christian faith, and that this was none other than the very room where one interviewed, consulted with, received orders from or, in the grave idiom of our business classes, “went into conference” with that great man, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson himself, one will further realize why peppermint lozenges

here partook somewhat the aspect of sacred wafers, and why their consuming was so like unto a ritual.

II

INTO this large high-ceilinged room so solemn with heavy dark furnishings, so dignified with its high-backed richly-carven Gothic chairs, rescued presumably from some auction room or abandoned church, so sacerdotal with its almost life-sized paintings of scenes from the Gospels—“Jesus in the Carpenter Shop,” “Jesus Feeding the Multitude,” “Jesus Ascending”—as well as numerous large and small photographs of flag-defended mission compounds in many lands—the Rev. Gabriel Bronson fitted perfectly.

It is doubtful if there was another room the length and breadth of the city into which its occupant fitted quite so perfectly; and Boston is a city of perfect fittings, more or less. He was, as it were, born to this room. This room and the Rev. Gabriel Bronson were, so to speak, indigenous each to the other. One could hardly be imagined without the other, just as palaces without kings, cathedrals without bishops, salons without handsome or at least interesting women can scarcely be imagined. He invested this room with the mystery, the awe, the categorical sanctity of an institution; rather, the moment he entered this room he became the institution.

For years into this impressively hushed atmosphere where the Rev. Gabriel Bronson sat behind a huge polished desk placed solidly, symmetrically, theocratically in the exact center of the room, on its darkened side, just beneath the “Ascension,” returning missionaries had trooped in properly subdued enthusiasm. Hundreds of them, in pairs, trios, half dozens, pathetic little groups in ill-fitting hinterland clothes of styles and seasons long past, all a trifle overcome amid such lofty elegance, sitting puppet-like on the edge of chairs, submissively inarticulate while the great man, comparing their cards with others taken from an index, moved slowly

from one to another, with massive manner granting to each a firm, though always a trifle reserved handclasp, a conscientious "Welcome, Brother," "Welcome, Sister," and scrutinizing them closely through the unbending benevolence of an all-comprehending smile.

"Ah," he would begin in a voice that, booming trumpet-like from the depths of the rabbinical brown beard, crashed through the silent room with church-organ resonance, the twin searchlights of his owlish spectacles turning disconcertingly down upon them from an index card, "Sister Joan Smithers, of India," or China, Afghanistan or New Guinea, "hm . . . fifty-four converts . . . hm . . . four years . . . hm . . . weak eyes . . . returned for operation . . . hm"; or "Brother Timothy Mathews, Province of Kwei-chau, Upper Yangtse, one hundred eighty-six converts . . . hm . . . promising field, that . . . hm."

Thereupon, he shepherding the conversation into purely secular channels, they would discuss long and earnestly the costs of conversion, referring occasionally to those heathenish masses themselves so naïvely unaware of this distant intensity of interest in their behalf.

Listening, one had impressions of far crowds and temples, of hill-crowning, sun-scorched mission compounds, of dull days, interminable nights, mesmeric frights, spleens, ennuis, nostalgias of hopelessness, almost unbearable burdens of impious doubt that, after all, might it not be the Word was falling on barren soil.

One sensed with these Bearers of Light and Bringers of Glad Tidings the immense immobility of masses invincibly wedded to heathen gods, of untold millions subjugate to the powers of darkness and evil. One felt, as they had felt, the insidious occult cunning of pagan priests; and had glimpses, too, of the dirt, the flies, the disease, the unspeakable poverty, stupidity and squalor of races not yet arrived at or far past the need of the light, the Glad Tidings. Looming over it all, dominating it all

with a tenacity no Wesleyan hymn or fervid prayer seemed potent enough to uproot, one apprehended the ponderous fixity of those oriental unregenerates and their baffling contentment with the faiths their fathers had left them.

Outgoing brothers and sisters with properly subdued enthusiasm trooped through this room, too. Each received the same firm, though always a trifle reserved handclasp, the same conscientious "God speed you, Brother," "God speed you, Sister," tendered by the great man himself, and each bore away to the lands of persistent heathendom reverential memories of that unbending benevolence, that penetrating and indecipherable smile. The handclasp, the words, the smile, the definitive appraisal from those evidential index cards never varied. Like the Ritual of the Lozenge, they too were possessed of an immoderate precision, a sedately solemn, even mystifying significance, as though they were studied aspects of some unique stratagem, genuflections and passwords to some transcendental ambiguity looming over an ominous future of stupendous suspense and eulogistic metaphor.

Those unknown thousands trooping through this silent room seemed to have left something of themselves behind. One became instantly and a little uncomfortably aware of this upon entering; just as in the urn-burial days of expiring autumn, coming upon blossoms faint for suns that never came or came too late, one is charmed for a moment by the tender illusion of what might have been, but saddened with the poignant certitude of what now shall never be.

Indeed, it required an effort to disperse the composite impression left in this room from those anonymous hosts of predominantly young, middle- or indefinitely-aged but seldom elderly and usually unmarried women from small town and countryside who, having received the Call, shared with others a complete absence of reasons for their resisting that clarion appeal. What they had left was nothing definite, perhaps could have been nothing definite, since all that now remained was but the hint

of a mere apparitional possibility, though not probability, of their potential independence.

Before their departure something, one sensed, had extracted or amputated that suggestive, perhaps even vital quality—this organization for which they were to become obscure cogs in its gigantic and complex mechanism; this room of overpowering silence and immoderate elegance; or perhaps the Rev. Gabriel Bronson himself with his unbending benevolence and the hidden significance of that all-comprehending, inscrutable smile. Whatever it was and however it had been accomplished, one was keenly sensitive to it, and was likely to leave this repository of mutilations tinged with a splenetic though quite decorously repressed melancholy.

Of the others, the returning ones, part of what they had left in this headquarters for elevating benighted heathendom, were equally vague emanations, impalpable and shadowy echoes, confirmatory exhalations, as it were, from pious labors in many vineyards that seemed to have settled in an invisible dust upon tables and fittings, entered the thick silence of costly rugs, fallen upon the frames of pictures, the carven arms of Gothic chairs, or gathered in the scrolls and gravures of exotic bric-a-brac and other expensive ornamentation.

III

OF the last, certainly they had left a great deal, a really astonishing quantity of rare and often priceless riflings of far countries; strange curios from Eastern bazaars, unguarded temples, private houses, wayside shrines. Here a bronze Buddha, a silvered statue, a chalice of graven gold, a set of sacred beads; there some ceremonial cloak richly brodered and begemmed with cabalistic signs and pictures, hallowed affairs in their *native* setting; yonder huge porcelain vases of mysterious coloring and poignant beauty, precious tablets of scripted jade, sculptural brasses, ivory carvings, peacock fans, teakwood tabourets, inlaid ebony tables, and a host of trinkets of

exquisite craft made from jewels and jades let into intricate backgrounds of malachite and mother-of-pearl. Such an overflowing and opulent display would be difficult if not impossible to duplicate in all its amazing and sumptuous variety beyond the walls of a well-endowed museum or the renitent privacy of some inveterate collector.

But the Rev. Gabriel Bronson never considered himself a collector of curios. A collector of souls he was indeed. He collected souls as some men collect money, as statesmen collect unguarded or defeated territory, as time itself might be said to collect experience upon the fields of fate.

The Rev. Gabriel Bronson would go far, indeed had already gone far; in fact, had scoured the world for souls. In pursuit of this, the Great Work, he had immense sums at his disposal, cohorts of workers—"helpers in the vineyard," he lovingly referred to them—legions of advance agents, was served by an unnumbered army of men and women spread in a vast network across the whole world. No spot was too far, no sum too large, no folk too lowly in his vigorous aspirations for collecting all the souls of earth before the triumphing gates of heaven. But this assortment of exotic bric-a-brac here, these "implements of heathendom," as he styled them, with a benedictory wave of his large white hand, why, these were simply gratuitous tokens, mere trifles picked up in passing as it were, quite justifiable spoils from the battlefields of unbelief. For, in a way, their being just here, safe in the impregnable sanctuary of his own alert care, also served the Good Cause since, manifestly, their removal from "out there" left no valid excuse for further *native* worship of such graven imagery.

His army of soul-collectors had been donating these slight mementoes of their activities for years; not, however, after the military manner of ancient and barbarous chiefs proffering tribute to their lords of war, because they must. Far from it! These, his "helpers," were not rendering unto Cæsar the things of

Cæsar, but unto God the things which were His. They gave out of an unblemished appreciation for the Rev. Gabriel Bronson's unquestionable efficiency in collecting, classifying and shepherding souls; through their recognition of his having risen, even as once there arose in Israel, the right man in the right place. . .

In this atmosphere at once so rich, so solemn, so ecclesiastical and so stimulating to his vigorous aspirations, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson was now called upon to do some hard thinking, to settle a problem. It was a profane problem in that it had little to do with the administering of his far-flung invisible empire, and scarce touched his stupendous conspiracy for marshalling earth's myriads of uncollected souls. It was closer, far closer home than that; a problem so close and so profane that he found himself almost unable to cope with it; a forbidding and unusual aspect. In fact, for the present at least, it seemed almost insoluble, which came as near to vexing the worthy man as anything ever had.

For years he had sat in righteous triumph over such matters as problems. Other men might avoid, deny, ridicule or turn their backs on problems, but not the Rev. Gabriel Bronson; he settled them. More secure in his own way than any king, more infallible than any judge, more occultly powerful in the far places of earth than any foreign minister, times without number the Rev. Gabriel Bronson had settled problems; dispensing solutions where others might have reached only deadlocks or failures. And now, just when his new efficiency methods for collecting souls were geared their highest, just when responsive encouragement was pouring in from the Lord's Vineyards as never before, there came charging madly into the studied calm of his well-ordered days, this disconcerting paradox of an insoluble problem.

To say the least—which was all he ever intended to say, since possible admissions of defeat always threaten in the direction of speech—it was irritat-

ing. Close to hand, profane in its realism, demanding immediate settlement, it fairly taunted him with possibilities for disaster. An insoluble problem would be that, he felt. *Deus ex machina* though he was, accustomed to arbitrary distributions of justice, advice, indulgence, reward or punishment though he might be, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson could not keep from sensing with unusual alarm the unaccustomed menace of an insoluble problem.

Instinctively realizing the need of extraordinary preparations, the demand for bold precautionary measures, and deciding to begin these at once, but facing the affair with the high courage of his absolute sanity, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson reached with furtive haste into the top drawer of his desk and took out *two* peppermint lozenges.

IV

THE problem concerned Chin Fong, a Chinese theological student living in the household of Rev. Gabriel Bronson. He served as a secretary to the great man, in the latter's opinion lending a rather cosmopolitan tone, a crowning foreign touch to his offices. Chin Fong was an indefatigable scholar, a youth of great promise, or so it had seemed prior to his being detected looking, not upon the wine when it was red, but upon young womanhood when it was all peaches and cream. Thereafter Chin Fong was plainly suspect. But the worst of it all, the insolubility of it all, as the Rev. Gabriel Bronson repeatedly told himself, the peaches and cream in the case was none other than Amelia Talmadge Bronson herself, the great man's only daughter.

That Amelia Talmadge Bronson really was peaches and cream might have been disputed by many, but that is the way she appeared to Chin Fong. All little white girls and young women seemed like peaches and cream to Chin Fong. Amelia, it so happened, was the only white girl he had ever been close enough to to suggest anything so intimate as love. Actually Amelia was a tall

gawky girl who did not know very much about life and men and things, but she was tremendously interested, tremendously. Thus far most things were "problems" to Amelia: the *why* of life, if you understand; how it came that the *best* things always seemed just a little out of reach; not quite *the* thing; too costly, too daring, too unusual, something.

Amelia was tremendously interested in Chin Fong, tremendously; he was so unusual. As most matters were conjectural to Amelia, including herself, she could not for the life of her comprehend why her father should oppose her entering the fields of foreign uplift as nothing less than the wife of Chin Fong. The Rev. Gabriel Bronson was always most persistent in his efforts to bring people into the Good Work, and even graded people according to their interest and activity therein. *Wasn't* it exasperating?

And his opposition did seem rather a shame, for, in a way—the way Amelia and Chin Fong looked—they were much alike. Amelia wore horn-rimmed spectacles, and so did Chin Fong. Amelia had closely bobbed hair, and Chin Fong's dank locks were always uncropped to the point of girlishness. Amelia did not, like Chin Fong, have a large turquoise-tinted wen on her nose, but that organ was none the less distinguished for its liberal proportions and emphatic shape, a nose that would never be taken for anything other than a nose.

What Chin Fong lacked in the way of nose was amply retrieved by immense ears that pushed out through his uncropped hair with no uncertain emphasis. The world over they would be recognized for just what they were. About Amelia was an ungainliness hard to depict, there was so much of it; nor would Chin Fong ever be remarked for his sprightly elegance in crossing a ballroom.

Somehow Chin Fong was never able to put on American clothes as they were intended to be put on, but wore them in a way that caused people to turn in the streets and smile. Little boys,

less considerate and more outspoken, would stop their play to yell: "Hey, look at th' goof!"

In their tastes, Amelia found they were much alike. Amelia was fond of long discussions about the nature of life and God and evil, destiny and the riddle of things, if you understand. Chin Fong was interested in these things too, or said he was. And it was such fun talking with him! He changed his r's into l's in the cutest way; and he had such a fashion of "getting right into things, just talking things right through—if you know what I mean," she confided to her closest girl friend.

The first time Amelia met Chin Fong, which was the day of her return from boarding school, she made the decision. Then and there she decided to be the wife of a missionary. *Such* fun! Uplifting the downfallen, spreading the glad tidings, a long trip at sea, and, just think!—the wife of a *Chinese* missionary; so unusual. She had never cared much for boys, American boys, though there had been girls at boarding school unkind enough to hint that boys did not take much to Amelia. But all that was forgotten now. Here in the person of Chin Fong was just that mystery and romance, just that margin of the unusual, the chance of "doing something different" which held such irresistible allure for Amelia.

Chin Fong suggested they say nothing about it to her father, and she had followed his suggestion. It was lots more fun keeping it secret. But it had somehow reached the ears of that great man, just how Amelia could not guess.

Chin Fong would never have told, never; of that she was sure. He was not the kind to tell. He was a quiet sort of person, which was, really, so she told her friend, part of his charm. Amelia was not at all suppressed in her own demeanor, but she liked Chin Fong's quieter, "subtler" ways, putting them down to the Chinese of it, which was eminently correct. She was tremendously, always had been tremendously interested in "subtle things"; things she couldn't understand, or even *quite* un-

derstand; and Chin Fong never quite revealed himself.

The Rev. Gabriel Bronson, ruminating over the insoluble problem, now recalled one or two incidents in the student life of Chin Fong that should have put him on guard. At one time Chin Fong had been much given to wandering the streets, invariably streets where little girls danced to hand organs or sat upon the front steps in early evenings. Several times sharp-eyed patrolmen had given him peremptory orders to "Take the air, John. Beat it while the beatin's good—and don't come back!"

And once, late at night, far too late for a theological student, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson now remembered, Chin Fong stole in with blackened eyes, a split lip, his sad clothes in an unusually sad condition. The next morning he told a sorry tale of having been set upon by rough fellows, "leal luffans," who had shamefully misused him.

At that time the Rev. Gabriel Bronson saw no reason to doubt the quiet and studious Chin Fong. It was regrettably true that American cities did hold cruel and invasive men who would do just that: take delight in abusing a harmless Chinese student. Chin Fong failed to mention sundry other items, or the fact that of all aliens in America, the Chinese are least set upon, either by "real ruffians" or by the brothers or neighborhood companions of little white girls. Following that sad night, Chin Fong wandered no more, or but little.

Not long thereafter, Amelia had returned. No appreciable time intervened before there began to come upon the Rev. Gabriel Bronson a certain light, which is why, to make a long story short, Chin Fong, quite a number of months before his studies would otherwise have ended, found himself aboard a Pacific liner. It was fairly evident that the Rev. Gabriel Bronson viewed the conversion of aliens and the marrying of them as affairs of distinct category, matters in no wise consonant one with the other. . . .

Amelia was awfully cut up. She had hardly been able to consume her pre-

pared breakfast food the morning after Chin Fong left, quite unknown to her before then. Chin Fong himself had been rather upset to leave so soon. But there seemed to be no escape. The Rev. Gabriel Bronson had a way about him. Even Chin Fong, much given to pursuing his own ends in his own modest fashion, had to admit this.

Of course, there was also the matter of his having been accompanied to the train by a stout, rough-appearing person quite unknown to Chin Fong, but whom the Rev. Gabriel assured Chin Fong would attend to the tickets, reservations and the like. The stout, unknown person did this, and stayed companionably close to Chin Fong to the very moment of the train's departure.

There was also another factor to his going, the slight matter of an inquiry being launched among the Chinese, a rather secret search for some unknown Chinese person too greatly given to wandering upon streets where little girls danced to hand organs or sat upon the front steps of evenings. Although Chin Fong did not often frequent Chinese haunts, the news of the inquiry was not too secret to remain unknown to him. On the whole, he decided it were best, perhaps, to leave with but a moderate show of objection, which so pleased the Rev. Gabriel Bronson that he immediately wrote several laudatory letters for Chin Fong.

After all, what did a few months more or less matter? There would be no question of opportunities in his native country. The Rev. Gabriel Bronson, thankful to solve the insoluble so easily—being himself unaware of Chin Fong's rather more personal motives for accepting so readily—had taken care to "place" him well. He would have a territory all to himself, virgin soil where a new field was being "developed." No question about that end of it. To make certain of this, however, before going Chin Fong prudently opened his sealed letters, a precaution the Rev. Gabriel Bronson had anticipated. Finding them quite satisfactory, without great objection, therefore, Chin Fong crossed the

country, and took ship for his native land.

So here he was on board. The two or three weeks ahead threatened to hang heavy on his hands. As he did not feel like study, he soon began to take an interest in his fellow passengers, especially their families, among whom were a number of young ladies and still younger children. Some little girls he found particularly interesting, and spent much time with them at their games and piloting them about the ship. . .

V

THE huntsmen were up in America and they were already past their first sleep in China, when the boys came down stairs and paused at the little bar—the London Bar, Bubbling Well Road, Shanghai, to be precise—for a last drink. Beyond them was that world-wide room where men on shore leave find, flirt and frolic with an assortment of variously-aged persons who make it their business to see that strangers, men who go down to the sea in ships, tourists, cosmopolitans and other unengaged folk shall in no wise bear away the slightest sense of their fair city's inhospitality. Through the beaded bamboo curtain one could hear them giggling and laughing, lighting cigarettes and jazzing to the music of a box that sings. Occasionally a measure or two from some Western song, and sometimes the clink of silver coins slipping down silk-stockinged legs, could be heard. A House of Good Cheer this, and these its cheerful servants.

Accepting without a shadow of repugnance the unavoidable custom of the country, Madam's cordial offer of "one on the house," the boys stood about in attitudes of satisfaction and chumminess. Red-spiced sam-shu, that potent native liqueur, universal breeder of good cheer in China, also sustains a justifiable reputation as a loosener of tongues, an inspirer of intimacies, of a little more than ordinary confidence. At frequent intervals, interspersing their satisfying entertainment of the evening, there had

been numerous rounds of sam-shu; and now, Madam, a short, stout Japanese hausfrau who possessed the not unusual Eastern distinction of a purple wen on her stubby nose, was pouring from a squat crockery jug the final potation.

He who was known as "Shorty," focusing the turquoise-tinted wen, an arresting bull's-eye amidst innumerable inconspicuous objects that oscillated somewhat vaguely around him, remarked facetiously:

"Say, Bill, that there's *some* wen—reg'lar beauty mark, what?"

Bill Thompson, six-foot bos'n's mate, followed Shorty's gesture:

"Yeah. Makes me think of that goofy Chink's wen we had 'board, 'member?"

A chorus greeted him.

"'Member? I should say so! Say, he *was* a goof. What become of him, anyhow?"

"Ho, didn't you hear?" and Shorty leaned forward confidentially.

For a few moments, ignoring even the drinks which Madam had set before them, five heads drew close together; five pairs of eyes followed Shorty's staccato gestures; five faces beamed with enjoyment.

"Yeah...that little one," Shorty continued, speaking sometimes in whispers, and more often, for emphasis sake, quite loudly. "You know, the one with the red cheeks an' the short dress, 'bout fourteen, mebbe thirteen...Yeah, right down there...dark place 'long the galley..."

An indignant chorus . . . tear-voiced . . . outraged:

"What! That goof! A white girl! ...Well, I'd like to caught him, the goof!"

"Oh, we goofed him, all right, all right," Shorty broke in, fragments of his speech slipping out from the circle of close heads. "Yea, right aft . . . same night...blowin' hard, an' rain, say . . . an' dark . . . 'bout eight bells . . . an' someone batted th'—with a bucket of paint as he went overboard. . . ."

Bill Thompson, bos'n's mate, rose to the occasion:

"Was *that* where that there paint got

to? Say, the bos'n give me hell. . . He was lookin' all over for that paint! He..."

But Shorty, not to be diverted from the larger aspect:

"Aw, don't be gettin' hopped up 'bout that paint. We should worry...Th' company can stand it."

The others agreed:

"Sure—for a goof!"

Bill Thompson slowly raised his glass, studying it judiciously before he spoke:

"Oh, sure—for a goof!"

Turning to them he raised his glass

still higher and said magnanimously: "Well, fellers, here's how!"

VI

As the boys finally stumbled out and into their rickshaws it was just the hour when, back in America, the Rev. Gabriel Bronson, a cablegram before him, was reaching furtively into the top drawer of his desk for a peppermint lozenge. Called upon to do some hard thinking, he faced with high courage and absolute sanity, another problem, an insoluble problem.



Who Are We That We Should Walk in the Night?

By John Russell McCarthy

FLOWERS are friendly enough, and a tree is a brother,
The river will hold you close, and even the sun
Will greet you as one comrade greets another—
Never one of day's friends but is cheerful, never one.

But when earth hides the friendly curtain of light
And opens the infinite vistas to human eyes,
Who are we that we should walk in the night
Or try to be friends with the strange cold gods of the skies?



YOU can never kiss a girl unexpectedly. The best you can do is to kiss her a little sooner than she expected.



WHEN a woman becomes prophetic she bores one. When she becomes reminiscent she frightens one.



The Subtle Alchemist

By Charles G. Shaw

*"The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmutes."*

I

THE lights of the great city gleamed through the dim December evening as a disconsolate figure trudged the streets that led to the waterfront. For the river was his objective and suicide his intention.

Life was unbearable, he felt. Everything he possessed had been lost in the late Wall Street crash and the girl he adored had jilted him for another. Depression gripped him in her clutches; bitterness gnawed at his soul. His efforts at everything he had attempted had been fruitless; his very existence seemed distorted—a badly drawn pastel in the gallery of life. Why had he ever been born? He was a failure and he realized he would never be anything else. What was the good of continuing? He would end it all forever and death by drowning, he had decided, was the surest and easiest way out.

The destination almost in sight, certain difficulties arose. How should he bring about his self destruction? A weight around his neck would certainly be necessary, which was something, perhaps, not to be discovered at the river. And he dwelt upon the size of the weight he would use. Suddenly his gaze lit upon a store directly opposite, a little grocery store. Crossing over, he entered nervously and approached the man behind the counter.

"I want something—er—something heavy," he began worriedly, shifting

his eyes from the grocer's face to the floor.

"Heavy, eh?" queried the other. "How about this?" And he indicated a large Christmas plum pudding that stood on a shelf.

"No, no. That's not the idea. Something more—er—something—"

"I got you. Here's the very thing. Finest on the market," cried the grocer, bringing forth a huge cheese. And he began to extol its weighty qualities.

"That won't do," interrupted the unhappy man. "Don't you understand what I mean? Something heavy—er—you know—"

"Oh, I know now," said the fellow significantly, and winked his eye.

He ambled to the rear of the shop where he fumbled among some boxes and crates for several minutes, returning presently with an oblong package wrapped in coarse brown paper.

"The best in town," he announced, "and half the price they ask anywhere else! You'll find it *heavy* enough."

"Oh—er—I'm afraid you—" the other began.

"Bosh!" interrupted the grocer authoritatively. "Safest stuff in the world. One hundred and twenty proof and smooth as velvet. I know the real thing when I see it and you can take it from me there's none no better nowhere." Whereupon he proceeded to remove the paper, revealing a quart bottle of rye whisky.

The other vainly attempted to ex-

plain it was not liquor he wanted but only became more and more confused. In the meantime the grocer had drawn the cork and, having produced a couple of tumblers, poured two generous drinks.

"See for yourself," he invited. "Here's how!" and presented his customer the larger of the two.

Reluctantly the latter raised the glass to his lips and dazedly swallowed half the libation. The liquid burned pleasantly on its course and gave birth to a rosy and glowing sensation.

"Pretty fine, eh?" observed the grocer as he paused for breath and tossed off the remainder of the drink.

"Why—er—yes," responded his companion, blinking and followed the other's example.

The effect of the alcohol was no insignificant one upon the dejected fellow. It gave him courage and he held forth his glass for another round.

"Certainly," cried the grocer, "glad you liked it," as he drew up a chair for the other, seating himself on the counter.

Surely life was a curious problem, reflected the unfortunate as he glanced about the shop; a problem that no one had ever come near to solving. The few exquisite moments he had experienced certainly had never equalized those hours of agony, those years of torture. Yet, somehow nothing seemed to matter half so much to him as it had but a short while before. But what was the use?

"I can't go on with it any longer," he sighed. "Didn't you guess why I wanted something heavy? Well, I meant a weight. Yes, a weight to tie around my neck. I'm going to drown myself. Get me?"

"You're ravin'. Give me your glass. This is the medicine for you." And he replenished the rapidly diminishing drink.

"Raving, hell! I tell you I'm going to commit suicide. There isn't a thing in the world I've got to live for.

Not a thing. Girl's thrown me down—friends have given me the cold shoulder, and I've lost everything I ever had," and he took a long swallow.

"Aw, buck up!" laughed the other. "There's lots of 'em worse off than you. Why, you're only a kid. You've got a whole lot to learn about life. You're healthy, ain't you? You're not married. What more could a guy ask? What you need is a shake-up. Go to a musical show. The 'Follies' is just the thing. Have a good laugh. Look at the pretty girls. Hear the catchy tunes. Tomorrow you'll feel different. Get in on some good thing and in a few months you'll be steppin' high."

"Oh, I'll never get anywhere. Everything's against me. A fellow's a fool who plugs on when there isn't the ghost of a chance. Easy enough to talk about a good thing but just try and find one. Just try. Every good thing I ever got in on blew up in about a month. I'm a hoodoo and I always will be. No two ways 'bout it. Besides, I'm sick of life. Sick of it. It's only a struggle at the best. A struggle every minute and the world's a damn tough place for a fellow that's down and out."

"Aw, you're cuckoo," cried the groceryman. "Take in the show. Funniest thing you ever seen. There's a little blonde on the left in the second number that'll knock your eye out. Get a seat down front. I tell you it's a whizz. Here's lookin'!" and he raised his glass to his lips.

"Health!" rejoined the other. "Good stuff, all right. Mighty goo' stuff. But river's answer for me. Icy, cold river. Won't know thing. No more cares. No more worries. All over. Goo' luck!"

"Say, go to a ticket agency," suggested the grocer. "They tell me those birds always have the best seats any time. I tell you what! There's one of 'em just three blocks west, on the corner. Goldblatt's the name. He'll treat you right."

"Oh, what's the use?" cried the other, "river's where I belong, frien'. Say, but this is wonderful liquor. Mos' won'erful liquor ever tasted in m' life. Nothing like liquor as tonic. Bes' tonic in world. Not stimulant. Jus' tonic. But what's it all 'bout? River. Wat'ry grave. Bloated corpse. That's me. Jus' a bloated corpse. Goo'bye trouble. Goo'bye everything." And he drained his glass to the dregs.

"One more round, brother," beamed the grocer.

After innumerable toasts and back-slaps, the other staggered out of the little shop.

* * * *

Fifteen minutes later a man entered the emporium of Mr. Irving Goldblatt. "Gi' me seat for 'Follies' t'night," he muttered. "Gi' me bes' seat in house 'way down front."



Fantasy

By Judith Tractman

I SHALL plough the sea
When the moon is high;
Plant handfuls of stars
Blown down from the sky.

Flowers shall spring up
Swift in the furrows;
Bewildering the sea—
Dancing with shadows.

I'll weave white music
From the ocean's foam;
Pluck all my flowers
And whistle myself home.



THERE are two kinds of lovers: those who take "no" for an answer and those who don't. The former are the kind a woman finally marries.



WHEN a man isn't wondering what woman to leave his money to, he is wondering what woman to spend it on.



The Hurdy-Gurdy

By Addison Hibbard

I

A WISER woman, in all probability, would not have taken it so seriously. But to Angela Salvano, dark, coming to plumpness and much given to ribbons and brilliantine, it was the one stultifying regret in her life. Anthony had long ago "made good"; did he not own the fine restaurant on the first floor? And did not the indefectible ones of the city dine with him when bent on little careless evenings in search of gaiety? More than the fact that Anthony was fourteen years her senior was she troubled by this one whim of his.

And the whim? Yes, I must tell you that, too; it was merely that he insisted on keeping the old hurdy-gurdy, with which he had made his start in America, in that little enclosure between the cashier's desk and the front door where everyone entering or leaving the Ninth Street restaurant was certain to see it.

"Tony, you take it away, eh? I place some nice palms there."

But Tony was adamant.

"And why should I be proud, Angela? The organ he give me my start. Is there anything you want?"

Angela Salvano never wanted anything else. Her household duties looked after by servants from the restaurant below, she was always off to a moving-picture theatre of an afternoon or entertaining a party of three or four in one of the secluded "private dining-rooms" of Tony's restaurant at night. Her husband, still pursuing the thrifty habits indicated by his cherishing of the old hurdy-gurdy, seldom retired be-

fore two of a morning, and by that time Angela had been asleep for an hour or two.

On the occasion of one of these little dinner-parties of his wife's, however, Anthony became suspicious. A little more than the usual amount of gaiety, a few extra demands on the waiter, a third resort to his dwindling private stock—all of these things he observed as he passed about from table to table looking after the welfare of his old and new guests. At one time he had passed the open door of the private dining-room to see his wife making sheep's eyes at young Joe Giacinti, manager and owner of the Rialto Moving Picture Palace—perhaps the most popular resort among the Italians of the quarter.

He went up to bed that night—after closing the restaurant and counting up the receipts—somewhat earlier than usual. He was determined to come to an understanding with her. "Look here, Angela," he would say, "all this must stop. The wife of Anthony Salvano must—must—" would he dare say it? He wasn't sure in his own mind whether he would or not.

But when he opened the bedroom door after noiselessly undressing in his own room, the whole question **was** solved for him.

Angela was not there.

II

A HALF-HOUR before Angela Salvano had left her husband's restaurant at the breaking up of her dinner party. As was her wont, she had said good-bye to her guests and, entering the hallway at the street entrance, had climbed the

stairs leading to the Salvano apartments on the second floor.

What she did after that, however, was unusual. Once in her room she packed a little bag of clothes, then, returning to the street, walked up to the corner of Tenth, where she stepped into a taxicab that was awaiting her. In the cab was Joe Giacinti, manager and owner of the Rialto Moving Picture Palace.

"Joe, we shall be happy. You are not afraid?"

"Afraid, nothing. Old Salvano will be a wiser bird than he is now before he gets Joe Giacinti."

When the car stopped before the Rialto Moving Picture Palace, there were few passersby to observe them. On an opposite corner someone seated on a fire-escape was playing a few elusive bars on an accordion.

Giacinti and Angela disappeared in a doorway north of the entrance to the theatre. On the third floor the man took a bunch of keys from his pocket, turned one in the lock and swung the door grandly for Angela to enter.

"Enter *our* home, *mia signora*."

A light left burning dimly in a crazy chandelier at the center of the room disclosed an interior rather expensively and tawdrily furnished. The draperies Angela was already deciding to change when—Diabolo! *What was that behind the door?*

A single look and Angela fled through the hall, floated down the stairs and was lost to sight before Giacinti could gather

his astonished wits and be after her. He went part way down the stairs in hot pursuit, when he suddenly stopped and climbed slowly back to the landing, and, entering his room, closed and bolted the door.

III

A QUARTER of an hour later Angela Salvano gently pushed open the door to her bedroom over the Ninth Street restaurant. Her spouse was snoring loudly. How well she knew that snore! The man worked up to a crescendo with every seventh or eighth snore, woke himself partly with the shock of the last snore, quieted down, and then started over. Angela waited for him to go through a series, to turn in the bed as he half awoke—and then, when he was safely launched in a second series, she glided quietly into bed beside him.

The next morning when Salvano went down to his desk in the restaurant Angela was there before him. She was dusting the hurdy-gurdy carefully.

"Hello, Tony." It was a cheerful greeting.

Angela went on dusting. That finished, she grasped the crank of the instrument and swung wildly into a selection from "Pagliacci." When the music came to an end, she turned abruptly to the silent and wondering Tony.

"Do you know what Joe Giacinti told me last night, Tony? Said he always kept in his best room the old push-cart he used to sell fruit from when he came to this country. Imagine, a *push-cart*!"



LIFE is like a flying landscape seen through the windows of a runaway auto-hearse.



A WIFE is a passing fancy that takes a long while to pass.



An Act of God

By Morris Gilbert

I

I KNOW you'll take good care of my little girl," said Mrs. Carter. Mason wondered if the particular movement of her head and neck as she spoke was what is termed "bridling." He concluded the term was happy, though loose.

He made an appropriately enthusiastic gesture—virile yet restrained—and conversation failed.

It was one of those depressing moments such as Mason had not known for years. He had called at a strange house to take a young person to a dancing party. He had waited on the steps of the brown-stone dwelling in the Eighties until a middle-aged domestic—but Mason half believed she was a dependent relative, she seemed so crushed and flustered—had let him inarticulately in.

She had preceded him into the drawing-room that one entered from the hallway. No solicitude had been expressed about his hat or coat, so halfway into the room he had backed out again and deposited the coat on a chair, and the topper on top of it. He had mumbled a phrase with a show of bravado as he did so. The action seemed to demand it.

Then he came back, rubbing his hands with gracious expectancy, and beamed into the room. It was vacant save for the crushed person. His entrance terrified her.

"Take a seat," she said and whisked herself timidly but with determination out.

Mason took a seat. Immediately he got up and resumed his posture of gra-

cious expectancy. He had wanted to examine the incredible blue vase that stood beside the gas-log fireplace, but he heard steps as of doom on the stairs. He caught a glimpse of green jade through the hall doorway. He was reminded of a Dunsany play.

Mrs. Carter went up and down stairs the way a bill goes through Congress. Her walk was a series of checks and balances. At the bottom, however, with a great fanfare of silk and burgeoning of bosom, she made the drawing-room in two strides.

"This is Mr. Mason?" . . . Followed five minutes of the almost pathological give-and-take that such occasions demand.

Mason really understood the case—Dorothy was an only child—evidently doted on—an evening party—with an Older Man (*ay de mi*)—and then, at Cora Mason's. Everybody had heard of his sister Cora, and greater houses than the Carters' might have been in turmoils of preparation for one of her dances. What he couldn't quite understand was his own share in the turmoil—just what was he doing here in the first place? Why had he asked Cora to ask Dorothy? Why was he coming for this little *backfisch*? . . .

Mrs. Carter was explaining with a rush why she was allowing Dorothy to go. Of course Ben—that was her husband, Mr. Carter—could have driven her 'round, and they could have sent for her at one o'clock. But Dorothy would have felt so embarrassed going to a strange house to dance, and meeting such a prominent person as Miss Mason—it is *the* Cora Mason—yes, Dorothy had

told her—that really it was very thoughtful and kind of Mr. Mason to come, and Mrs. Carter was sure he would understand.

Mr. Mason not only understood but considered it a privilege.

At that moment the crushed person appeared in the doorway with scissors and thread in her hand and an agonized expression. . . . All the norms in amalgamation, Mason conjectured. . . . Mrs. Carter was out of Committee and waiting a presidential signature at the head of the stairs in no time.

The sash would hang right, or there was a revolt about the length, so much was evident.

Presently Mrs. Carter returned. She explained that Ben was at the Club—so little relaxation for him at home after these hard days at the office—he had to get out occasionally—it took his mind off business.

Mason made a sound that was intended to be solicitous and comprehending. When his ears heard it, it sounded just like the noise an articulate rubber sponge might make. Mason almost apologized; it was such an absurd noise; and then he almost chuckled when he discovered that Mrs. Carter hadn't realized its absurdity. Funny things, conversations. Especially with nervous dowagers with *backfisch* daughters.

Mrs. Carter cocked her ear. There were sounds on the stairs.

"There she is now!" she cried.

Both rose. Mason found himself making pell-mell for the hall with Mrs. Carter. "Fleeing from the storm," he mused. When they passed through the door, a little squeak and a scurry of quick feet came to their ears.

"What can be the matter?" said Mrs. Carter in a mortified tone. "She's gone back for something."

The crushed person was standing like a gray image of woe at the top of the stairs. She was whispering in terrified accents. . . . "On the top of the bureau. . . . Look on the little table. . . . It must be there. . . . Over by the window. . . ."

"What is it, dear?" called Mrs. Car-

ter, bending over the way a half-back does when he takes the ball, as she made for the stairs, gathering up her skirt.

But before she was under full headway the light steps could be heard returning, and in an instant Mason was reassured as to why he had come.

II

DOROTHY stood at the head of the stairs a moment, and then started down. She was one of those exquisite slim children just emerged from colthood. In their arms and legs there is a slight exaggeration of length. The lines of them are augmented, as it were, by sheer audacity, and their curves diminished by a trick that suddenly delightfully fails to work. . . . and there is a curve after all. They bewilder by giving two conflicting impressions at once—an impression of fragility and an impression of steel's resilience. They are the Mænids and the Bassarids of the age. . . . "The wild vine, slipping down," Mason found himself quoting.

Elbows. That was probably the distinguishing feature of the type, he conjectured. Elbows a trifle angular, a trifle gauche. . . . saplings. . . . willow saplings. . . . all an effect of line. . . . Dorothy might have been drawn in two dimensions. The panels of her white frock met at the shoulders. One noted little disturbances that would one day be breasts. . . .

Mason realized quite suddenly that the girl simply made him drunk. It was as if she had given him medicines to make him love her, he decided. And, his thoughts continued, she would probably never know it. . . . he doubted if he would ever tell her. . . . she wouldn't guess it herself. Her native hue of resolution was happily not sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. . . . and, after all, it really wouldn't make much difference if she knew or not. That conclusion, Mason argued to himself, had no effect upon the authenticity and depth of the feeling she created in him.

Mason smiled at the intricacy of his sensibilities. . . .

But why shouldn't they be intricate, he asked himself—he had done nothing else all his life but cultivate them.

By that time he and Dorothy were speaking while Mrs. Carter brooded over her fledgling.

Mason noted that Dorothy gazed rather fixedly at the bright electric light over his shoulder. He had observed her do it at other times. She did it because it made her eyes shine, he knew.

Then it was that Mrs. Carter spoke in such gratifying terms of confiding her little girl to Mason. And then she bridled. Mason concluded that after all bridle was not the word. There should be a new word, and he made it up—she prooted, that was it. . . .

"Yes, Mr. Mason, that's all I require of my children," Mrs. Carter was saying. "Just to come and kiss me before they go to bed. It doesn't make any difference how late it is, they know their mother wants them to come and kiss her good-night."

Mason noted that she was prooting again.

"Ever since Arthur was a little boy—Arthur is my eldest; Mr. Mason, I want you to meet him some time—he's in automobiles—the selling end—ever since he was a little boy, he always came and knocked on the door of my room and then came in to kiss his mother good-night."

Mason was struggling into his coat and trying to express proper interest at the same time. He found himself returning the conventional proot by nods and becks. A very contagious thing, a proot, he observed; and he found that Dorothy was half-way out the door.

"Isn't mother funny," said Dorothy when they were in the limousine. "Of course I always go in and kiss her good-night if I've been out anywhere—but Arthur has got so he just doesn't come home at all! One night he did—two of his friends brought him—and he made one of them go and kiss mother for him. She never knew the difference. It was a very good plan, but sometimes he can walk alone and then he can't get anybody else to do it."

Mason was disturbingly conscious of the slim little body beside him in the bowery interior of Cora Mason's automobile. She was perfect, he concluded. Physically perfect, and not troubled with mind. Better still—it was what had attracted him to her in the first place—there was a quality about her spirit that he found superb. It was a quality of composure mixed with forthrightness and apparent courage. In that regard it seemed to Mason quite masculine. There were no layers of coyness and indecision to be sloughed off to get at the honest fabric of this girl. What she seemed to be saying was said with frankness.

So Mason summed her. They had met three times; the first time at a maudlin party in a studio, the other times when he had invited her to tea on dull afternoons.

Mason, in the limousine, self-analysis keenly stirred by her proximity, believed he had found at last the answer to the question that had been troubling him—he was a meddler, that was it. He wanted not so much to make himself happy as to make her happy—always a dangerous attitude. He told himself that he wanted her to get her chance, to find the proper medium for the expression and development of those qualities he saw in her—qualities it wasn't a bit necessary to talk about—to her or anybody else. . . . Was that the truth? he wondered with a start. His own mind sometimes bewildered him. Did it always tell him the truth? . . . When he thought about the studio party he winced. It was not the setting for her, he concluded righteously.

He recollected the studio party—

III

"HUMAN nature!" Red asseverated. "Don't it beat hell?"

Red was sitting on the edge of the bathtub, the interior of which was lined with pillows. It was the most comfortable seat in the studio. Red's husband gave her a push. She resigned herself to the applied force and was too lazy to con-

tinue her remarks, which had been evoked by the spectacle of a fight between two of the best friends in the world.

It was one of those parties where everybody gathers in the bathroom to give advice about the girl who has just passed out. Solicitous hands had removed the girl's frock and she was resting with dignity on the tile floor.

"I am an artist," a gentleman was saying in a large voice. "I create beautiful things. I live for beauty. I wonder if the coffee's boiling."

People were coming and going like canaries jumping on and off their perches on a spring morning. Shortly before her collapse the girl on the floor had confided to several persons that she was a home girl, that her mother was Spanish and her father Scotch, that she had been born in San Antone, and that she had done a great deal of war-work with devotion, notably appearing as Miss America in a pageant in Borough Hall, Brooklyn. She said, "Si, si, señor, I love tamales, muchacho mañana," and then she underwent a seizure.

In an armchair in the living-room a man was sitting, immobile as a work of Rodin with a suggestion of Art Young in the composition of the trousers. His head was in his hands. At the back of his neck reposed a wad of handkerchief that had once been wet. He had not moved in three hours. At his feet was a receptacle.

The girl on the bathroom floor sat up and made an impressive gesture.

"Somebody give me back my girdle," she said with firmness and dignity. "This party's too rough for me. I'm going home."

But she was bunkered because her partner was the man of bronze in the living-room.

"Beautiful things," said the artist. "I understand them. I make them. And then I sell them to the goophers uptown. How about that coffee?"

The scuffle between the two best friends in the world broke out again. The upshot of it was the depositing on

the pavement outside the door with compulsion of one of them. The door shut with a bang. The man outside got to his feet. He examined the blank house front for some moments. Then he lifted up his voice.

"Throw me out, will you?" he called. "Give me the bun's rush, will you?"

He waited for an answer, but there was none.

"It took four of you to do it," he cried.

There was no response.

"Come out one at a time," he called, "and I'll show you. . . ."

The house front was impassive.

"Why don't you throw my hat out, too?" shouted the man grievously. "I can't start home without my hat and coat."

After a few moments of ponderous silence he started home. . . .

Inside, the coffee was boiling. the man of bronze became suddenly active, someone pulled Red out of the bathtub, and the girl with the Spanish mother was holding hands with a boy from Williams.

"You and me," she said. "Congratulate each other. We're the only sensible peopler here."

"You're gonna gimme your telephone number, aincha?" said he from Williams.

After a period in which everybody's spirits rose under the agency of the coffee, the party broke up. One group of half a dozen, tying themselves together in single file with bathrobe ropes, and armed with canes and umbrellas for alpenstocks, went away, climbing the piled snow glaciers of the Square, and were lost to view amid sounds of laughter.

It was at this party that Mason met Dorothy.

She had been very quiet all evening. Her demureness was in contrast to the rather flaunting propriety of others. She was alive with interest, so much was evident.

It was her escort who got the bun's rush, so Mason took her home.

Before they left they had a chat. It

revealed no depth of learning to Mason. Candor and charm, Mason concluded . . . admirable qualities, sweeter than honey in the honeycomb.

"How did you happen to be there?" Mason asked on the way home.

"Jim is a friend of my brother's," replied Dorothy.

"Did you have a good time?" Mason inquired.

The method he used with quiet people was to ask questions. Mason found he often profited highly in diversion by that system. Just get very much interested in your vis-à-vis, was the way to do it, and ask the simplest questions. Sometimes the answers would be so complex and sinister as to uncover depth below depth.

"Yes," cried Dorothy, with more enthusiasm than she had yet displayed. They happened to be passing a lamp, and she looked at it so that her eyes flashed.

"You didn't mind the rioting and mess?"

"I thought it was fun," said Dorothy simply.

She turned to Mason with a confiding gesture. "I love parties like that."

Her reserve was less evident than Mason had hitherto noticed.

"It's so—so much like real life—fun—everything—" she said.

Mason found the remark cryptic, but he gathered its sense.

"Aren't you imagining a vain thing?" he asked, smiling.

"I hate to be kept at home," replied Dorothy, with a certain obscurity. . . . Then—

"Mother will be waiting up . . ." she said.

There was something extremely revelatory to Mason about these few rather incoherent remarks of Dorothy. He looked at her with new interest. A presentiment of determination, of wilfulness—almost unscrupulous—in the girl's character occurred to him swiftly. Mason discovered that her eyes, when she was unconscious of them, were pageants—pageants, just now for instance, of the unexplored, the beautiful, the infinitely

and terribly possible. Where was the child bound, he wondered. . . .

Mason, going home that night, thought of a kite. If you take a kite, he mused, and start running with it on a level place, it may sail and it may not. It certainly won't go very high without an unusual wind. Take that kite up a steep hill, and run down it, letting the kite trail behind—well, there's usually a wind around a hill. . . . Are you lying to yourself, Mason? he asked himself as he fumbled for the latch.

IV

"WHAT'S it all about, Fred?" asked Cora Mason.

She and Mason were sitting near a window in her sunny apartment overlooking Park Avenue some weeks after the night when he introduced Dorothy at her dance.

"Purely altruistic," remarked Mason brusquely.

His sister smiled.

"There's a remark in Wilde about the truth being never pure and rarely simple," she said. "It applies to altruism where you are concerned."

"You flatter me," said Mason with dignity.

"There's always another reason somewhere," she continued. "Or rather, you always conceal a perfectly normal if elementary reason behind something absurd."

"That's an unfortunate impression that my natural kindly impulsiveness often lays me open to," Mason replied. "I do things out of the candor of a generous nature and I'm accused by everyone of the most sinister designs."

They watched the motors winding lithely in the street below. Cora laughed.

"Dony!" she said. "Dony is frantic. She rings me day and night. 'Who is this person that Ted is infatuated with?' she wails. 'I can't have my son running after people's daughters one never heard of. Where did Fred find her? And why, for God's sake, *why!*' She has been hounding Ted senior too. When-

ever we meet he cocks a baleful eye at me and stutters into his moustache. He acts like a weeping walrus!"

"He always did," said Mason with a trace of savagery.

"And when they both start talking it prostrates me," Cora went on, ignoring Mason's interjection.

"But why do the heathen so furiously rage together?" inquired Mason. He was irritated.

Cora looked at him, round-eyed.

"But why not?" she said. "Must I repeat Dony's questions?"

"What questions?" asked Mason.

"Who is she?"

"She's a most charming and lovely child," he said stoutly. "Much too charming for that young hoodlum, Ted."

"Oh, Ted—he's impossible. "Naturally," said Cora soothingly. "No one expects him to be anything else. But—well—where does the lovely child live, for instance?"

"In the Eighties," responded Mason.

"But where—"

"Oh—on the wrong side, of course!" he broke in irascibly.

"They're not in the *Register*," said Cora softly.

"A penny saved is a penny earned," he replied.

There was a pause. Cora laughed again.

"Ted," she said—"Ted himself runs in here every day—exuding gasoline at all his pores without exception. His finger-nails are black and his knuckles simply raw from fiddling with motors. Until this girl appeared, like a Virgin with a cigarette, Ted never associated with anybody but mechanics and chauffeurs—a very wholesome environment. Now he uses my place for a dressing-room. Towels, Fred! He covers all my best linen with grease, and digs it out of his hair with my own pet comb, till the whole apartment smells like a service station."

"She's civilizing the young devil," said Mason.

"I've had to give him a wardrobe for his clothes, and he has shirts and neck-

ties and shoes sent directly here from everywhere in town, so that a spinster like myself is open to a great deal of comment," continued Cora with a touch of malice.

A door slammed and a voice called, "Hello, Cora, did that gre-solvent come?"

Cora nodded.

"There he is now," she murmured complacently, like a minor prophet saying I—told—you—so.

Mason lifted his voice.

"Come in here, you young barbarian," he called.

A young man came in.

"Hi, Fred," he said pleasantly. "Cora, give me a cigarette, will you?"

As she indicated the box of cigarettes she smiled at Mason.

"You see, he's stopped calling me aunt," she said as if describing a pathological case.

"Been out on the parkway with a new Peugeot," volunteered Ted. "Had her up to sixty-five."

"Whose Peugeot, Ted?" asked Cora softly.

"Don't know—belongs to somebody. I know the fellow that drives it," said Fred.

Ted was of medium height. He had unruly dark hair, brown eyes that snapped, and a face like Robin Good-fellow—all mischief and confidence and youth and vigor. A muscular body, sound as a bell, and evidently no regard for his clothes. He fidgeted.

"What are you doing here, young ape?" inquired Mason severely.

"Gotta get dressed—gotta go to a rookus," replied his nephew.

"A what?" Cora asked.

"A rookus—a twitch—a shindy—an annual tea-dance of the F. X. Shannon Marching and Clam-Bake Association—it's at Pierre's," he explained. Thereat he rose, threw his cigarette among the ferns that were standing in his aunt's fireplace, and started hastily out of the room.

Mason called after him.

"Who are you going with?"

"Oh, lay off, you big stiff," the young

man tossed back over his shoulder as he reached the door.

Cora and Mason looked at each other. After a while Mason smiled, too.

"Priceless manners—and such diction," he murmured.

At the end of twenty minutes Ted returned. Renovated, Mason decided—a new custom body on the chassis. Almost clean, too. Ted held out his paws for inspection by his aunt and inquired the time.

"Ten minutes early," he said.

"Ten minutes to fidget in," amended the aunt. "Ted, put down those candle-snuffers at once! I won't have my antiques treated like tire-tools."

Ted sat down. After a minute he drew his chair close and smiled at his aunt and uncle. He drew some folded currency from his pocket. He counted out before them ten one-hundred-dollar bills. And he grinned an enigmatic grin.

"Where on earth did you get that money?" cried Cora.

"What are you doing with it?" demanded Mason.

"Gotta buy something," said Ted exasperatingly.

"Where did you get it?" Cora repeated.

"Promise not to tell the Old Party?" the youth inquired.

Cora and Mason promised.

"Higgins," said Ted.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Mason.

"Got it from Higgins," Ted confided screenely.

"Who is Higgins?"

"He's the garage johnny where we keep the cars," he said.

"You mean to say you borrowed a thousand dollars from the owner of the garage where your dad keeps his cars?" asked Cora, for explicitness' sake.

"I didn't borrow it exactly," Ted answered. "You see, the Old Party's bill there every month runs up to quite a lot—well—you two aren't going to squeal, are you?—he'll just add fifty dollars or so a month till it's all square. He shows me the accounts, see, and he can't put

anything over on me. I do most of the work myself as far as that goes, and he charges for it anyhow, so I'm really doing him a favor at that."

He paused.

Mason and Cora were speechless.

"Well," cried the young man, "time to move the boat—never late for an appointment, say I, no matter how pressing—"

He started to his feet.

"Little shopping to do," he said, turning to the door.

"Very particular purchase—taking along expert female adviser," he said.

"Ted!" cried Mason. "What are you talking about?"

Ted was nearly at the door.

"Platinum and ice, old stupid," he sang out rudely. "Platinum and ice!"

He was in the hall, but he stuck his head back in the room.

"Say it with rocks," he cried, and was gone. . . .

V

HALF an hour later Mason and Cora were still sitting near the window. Shadows had crept slantwise across the street below, making purple velour cushions out of the piles of ice and snow at the gutters. Lights were glowing like a long perspective of altar candles.

The two had said little, but Cora still smiled.

"I know your susceptibility, Fred," she said at last, "but I never knew it to be vicarious before."

Mason looked serious.

"I'm thirty-eight, Cora," he said. "The fevers are abating."

Cora looked at him in joyful amazement.

"You frightful liar," she said.

Mason smiled rather grimly. It was some moments before he answered.

"At least I've come to the time of life when one realizes one can't be all things to all men—in my case women, of course. Wasn't that what they said about Cæsar's wife, by the way?"

"All things to all men?—not at all," Cora responded tartly.

"I just begin to realize that in dealing with people, there may be some circumstances you can't beat," Mason resumed. "And that," he said, "is probably the way God has felt for the last forty or fifty æons."

"Does all this make you happy, then?" asked Cora.

"Not particularly," Mason responded. "But still, you never can tell what will be fun and what won't, can you?" Then the maid brought tea in.



Sunday

By George O'Neil

WELL then, suppose we wander out today
And watch Spring work in her familiar way,
Put softness over water, sky and grass,
Into the eyes of all the young that pass.

We will not mention one uncertain thing,
Not life, not death or love . . . unwondering,
Let us walk out where there is only light,
Forgetting there is such a thing as night;

Forgetting that in darkness all things change . . .
Much is significant, but men are strange.
Let us go out into the Sunday throng;
Where beauty's flower has broken—we belong.



STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF SMART SET.

Published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1922.

STATE OF NEW YORK } ss.
COUNTY OF NEW YORK }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George Jean Nathan, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor of the Smart Set, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Smart Set Company, Inc., 25 West 45th St., New York City; Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Managing Editors, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Business Manager, E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City. 2. That the owners are: Smart Set Company, Inc., E. F. Warner, George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Estate of E. F. Crowe, 33 West 42nd St., New York City. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: George Jean Nathan and H. L. Mencken, 25 West 45th Street, New York City; E. F. Warner, 25 West 45th St., New York City; Perkins-Goodwin Company, 33 West 42nd St., New York City. Stockholders of Perkins-Goodwin Company are: E. F. Crowe (Estate), Louis Calder, F. W. Westlake, John Atkins, S. Goldman, W. F. Anders, J. A. Brady, C. W. Rantoul, C. T. Rufo, 33 West 42nd St., New York City. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 25th day of September, 1922. (Signed) GEORGE JEAN NATHAN, Editor.
My commission expires March 30, 1924. [SEAL] A. W. SUTTON, Notary Public.

Donkeys

By Leonid Andreyev

(Authorized Translation by Herman Bernstein)

I

THE famous Enrico Spaghetti was justly regarded as the favorite of the gods and of the people. Strong and handsome, he possessed a fascinating voice, an incomparable bel canto, and at his very first appearance on the stage he overshadowed all other famous singers and was nicknamed Orpheus. When he was thirty years old his fame had spread throughout the Old and New Worlds, from sunny Rio Janeiro to the cold hyperborean lands.

His parents were simple folk who lived a life of poverty, but Enrico amassed enormous wealth through his heavenly talent and became the friend of many persons of high station: of English peers, of German counts and even of the then wealthy Prince of Monaco. And many philosophers, free from cheap enticements, became intimate with the great singer, striving to fathom the secret of his extraordinary gifts, while painters and sculptors vied with one another in picturing and immortalizing his fine head and face, whose features bore the unmistakable stamp of distinction. It is superfluous to mention that society women were most generous to him, their magnanimity often bordering on unbridled passion, but being a sensible man and loving his art above all else, Enrico disregarded their reckless advances and succeeded in maintaining all the charms and comforts of single-blessedness.

At the time when Enrico Spaghetti was making his reputation the gramophone had not yet been invented, and we have no means of judging the quality and power of his voice, but in the memoirs of his contemporaries and in the magazines of that time we find numerous statements to the effect that his voice was fascinating beyond belief, and it seemed as though it belonged to an omnipotent wizard. According to these accounts, the thousands of people who listened to Enrico lost complete control over themselves, and, at the wizard's will, were obediently transported from bitter tears to uncontrollable laughter, from despair to dazzling delight and almost wild ecstasy. With the very first sound of his voice, rising to the sky on the wings of inspiration, he subdued the most indomitable souls and led the people as if they were blind, or as a magnet attracts iron dust. True, many proud people tried to resist his mysterious charms, but there is no record of any instance when such resistance was crowned with success, usually the unfortunate persons showing such resistance turned into the warmest admirers of Spaghetti.

Thus, it is said, a certain statesman, powerful in his domain, who created kingdoms and powerful legions, but who was entirely indifferent to music and to beauty, for a long time declined to hear Spaghetti, declaring that he would fall asleep in his chair at the first sound of his voice, as he

used to fall asleep to the tune of his nurse's lullaby.

"With a barrel of wine and to the accompaniment of a drum, I would perhaps be prepared to hear him sing, and I would perhaps even sing a little myself, as I used to during the student feasts, but these trills and the piano—excuse me, I am too busy!" he said angrily to those who tried to induce him to go to the concert of the visiting singer.

But what happened? Invited to the box by a royal personage whose invitation he dared not decline—for the invitation was equivalent to an order—the great statesman did not fall asleep, on the contrary, he fell into a state akin to ecstasy, almost madness. Flushed with delight, he thus expressed himself at the end of the concert in a conversation with the royal personage:

"Your Highness! If I were given such a voice, I would without shedding a single drop of blood conquer France, Austria and Great Britain and place them at your feet. To some I would sing: 'March along behind me!' To others I would sing: 'You are conquered by me! Attention!' and all would be ended, with your majesty's permission. I must admit that this is stronger than the bayonet, even stronger than the cannon!"

And Enrico, rewarded by a high mark of honor, went on, sowing everywhere his fascinating gifts, and seeing no bounds to his wizardly powers. For that of which the statesman only dreamed had already become partly true; and the great singer had the occasion to experience his power over a coarse mob. That happened in London, in one of the dark and dangerous quarters, where Enrico went alone, unaccompanied, for a rendezvous. Suddenly surrounded by a group of robbers who threatened to take his life, he forced them by his singing to abandon their criminal intentions, and continuing to sing, conducted them as obedient children are led by a careful nurse, to the very

gates of the police station, where he turned them over to the authorities, mute with admiration and surprise.

It was quite natural that under such circumstances Enrico Spaghetti became imbued with a deep faith in his supernatural powers, and at times, beholding himself in the mirror, he seriously imagined that he was of divine origin.

II

LIKE all other singers who have no leisure for literary studies, Enrico did not know for a long time who was Orpheus, by whose name his admirers and the magazines frequently called him. One day he addressed the following question to his secretary and friend, Honoria de Vietri:

"Tell me, who was Orpheus whose name I hear so often in praise? I am tired of it. When did he live? And is it possible that that tenor was so much superior to me that I should be adorned with his name? I have strong doubts about it."

The esteemed and highly intelligent Honoria in answer told the singer the myth about Orpheus who fascinated by his song the forest, the rocks and the wild beasts of the desert.

"The trees," said Honoria, "attracted by the power of the splendid sounds, gathered around the singer and gave him shade and coolness; the bewitched rocks surrounded him; the birds of the forest left the thicket, and the beasts came out of their caves and listened quietly and humbly to the sweet songs of Orpheus. . . ."

"So it is a fairy tale!" said the proud singer with a sigh of relief. "Well, and how did Orpheus end his life?"

"Very badly, Enrico," answered Honoria; "he was indifferent to the women who he attracted by his songs, and for that he was torn to pieces. Beware, Enrico!"

The singer laughed:

"Yes, in this respect we resemble each other. I also will be torn to

pieces some day. Tell me, my friend, could this Orpheus have charmed the Count who gave me a medal?"

"I suppose he could."

"And could he have conducted the robbers to the police station by his singing?"

"I think he could have done that, too. But that is only a fairy tale, while you are alive, and there is no reason for you to envy him, incomparable one."

Enrico became thoughtful and said slowly:

"Yes, I am alive. But if you want, I will go out tomorrow morning on the square and start a revolution in Italy!"

"I have no doubt you could do it," answered the cautious and considerate Honoria de Vietri, "but I don't know what you would do with the rebels afterwards. In order to rule them, you would have to sing unceasingly, day and night, and your health would hardly permit that!"

Both laughed at the joke, and thus their convention ended. But the egoistic and proud Enrico could not reconcile himself to the thought that even the mythical Orpheus was above him in the opinion of people, and whenever he heard his name mentioned again in praise, he felt as if someone had wounded his very heart. If he could only hear Orpheus sing once and compare his voice and his manner of singing! It is very possible that such a comparison would have shown that the fame of Orpheus was overestimated and would have dispelled the prejudice from which he, Enrico, must now suffer so unfairly. But what of the rocks that gathered about the singer? Of course that was nonsense of which it was useless to talk, but what of the birds and the beasts? True, at present the birds are frightened by human beings and are not so trustful as were the birds in those days; and such beasts could be found only in menageries nowadays—but nevertheless—

Occupied with his affairs, Honoria

had forgotten entirely about this conversation, when the singer suddenly asked him, in order to be guided by his knowledge and his counsel:

"Listen. Was that Orpheus able to charm and attract domestic animals by his singing? For instance, cows, dogs and hens?"

Honoria thought a while and answered cautiously:

"I don't know whether there existed at that time such domestic animals as you enumerated, but if they existed, then Orpheus, of course, charmed them also with his song. But that is only a fairy tale, Enrico, and you are devoting too much thought to it."

"It is immaterial to me whether it is a fairy tale or not!" answered the singer angrily. "But I am sick and tired of it. I don't want to hear any more of this Orpheus, about whom they tell so many lies."

The frightened secretary hastened to agree with him, but this calmed the agitated and offended singer only outwardly. And the greater his triumphs, the more flowers, money, love and adoration Fate showered upon him, the more hateful became to him the mythical image of the unsurpassed Orpheus who could charm not only human beings but also animals. The health of the famous singer began to decline perceptibly, and often his surprised and frightened women admirers did not know the cause of his sudden outbursts of anger and irritation with which the unfortunate Enrico met their tender glances, their flowers and their kisses.

Morose and sad, responding to the kisses of their hot and perfumed lips, he thought in despair: "Ah, if you were only cows, charmed by my singing! What is your adoration worth now? Nothing!"

At last Enrico's patience was exhausted. One beautiful day he said drily to his secretary, Honoria de Vietri:

"Listen to me, and please do not argue or contradict. I have decided. I want to prove to Orpheus and to

his admirers that I, Enrico Spaghetti, can do as much as he, and that my talent is not limited to human beings only. Gather three or four dozen donkeys in my park in the outskirts of the city next Sunday—"

"Donkeys!" exclaimed the astonished and terrified Honoria, but the singer stamped his foot angrily and shouted at the top of his beautiful voice:

"Yes, donkeys! Donkeys, I am telling you! If you and others like you can understand me, how dare you think that donkeys could not understand me? They are very musical."

Honoria bowed his head in reverence:

"Your desire will be fulfilled, incomparable one. But it is the first time I hear that donkeys are musical—on the contrary, the proverbs, and the experience of nations have taught us that these animals are devoid of any musical or critical sense. Thus, for instance, the fable about the nightingale—"

"Are you very fond of the vulgar nightingale?" retorted the singer, adding: "Honoria, drop this slander against the donkeys. I believe there is just as much exaggeration and untruth in this as there is in the fame of that accursed Orpheus. The misfortune of the donkeys is due to the fact that they lack a voice, but not the musical sense or the appreciation of singing; their very desire to make harsh noises, which is such a tax upon them, and which gives their braying a strongly dramatic character, testifies to the fact that they are deeply musical. Whom do they hear in their life? Only the drivers, whose voices are hard and disgusting. You will see, my friend, what will happen to them when my inspired voice reaches their ears. I shall sing to them all I sang for the Brazilian Emperor, the Count, the robbers and the Queen of England.

In vein were the entreaties of the cowardly but sensible Honoria. Believing implicitly in his wizardly

power and omnipotence, Enrico would not listen to his secretary, and finally he even convinced him. "Perhaps Enrico is right after all," thought the secretary, as he went to hire the donkeys; "perhaps they are not entirely dead to art, and the power of Enrico is indeed unlimited!"

Confident of his triumph, Enrico desired to lend special pomp to this contest. He ordered that the mayor and other prominent members of the municipality be invited, in addition to his regular admirers who came any time he opened his mouth to sing. But the first three rows he reserved for the donkeys, with due apologies to the honored guests. He wanted the donkeys to be right near him while all others in the audience were to occupy the side seats and the seats behind the donkeys.

One circumstance somewhat surprised and even irritated the famous singer: It was necessary to pay from three to five lire for hiring each donkey for the occasion. This was the first time in Enrico's life when, instead of the public paying him, he paid the public; but Honoria soothed him, explaining that the price paid was low as compared with the prices usually paid for front seats at his concerts; and sighing prayerfully he added:

"And if you should triumph in this contest, and I have no doubt of it any longer—I shall be perfectly justified in raising the prices for the next concerts, so you will only gain by it. The main thing is to triumph!"

"You may depend upon me," answered Enrico, laughing, thinking almost lovingly of the donkeys that did not even suspect the pleasure that was awaiting them.

III

WHILE the workingmen were hastily building an arena for the invited guests and a platform for the singer in his park, and while the decorators were busy ornamenting the entire place with flowers, flags and small

lanterns, while the whole city was talking about the daring enterprise of the gifted Sparghetti, and, divided into parties, arguing as to the outcome of the contest, Enrico and Honoria were doing their own work.

Shaken in his traditional opinion of donkeys, though not yet thoroughly convinced, Honoria de Vietri adopted all possible measures for the purpose of preparing to some extent at least these unaccustomed auditors for the coming pleasure. Having decided to spend additional money, he kept the donkeys for three days in the park, in front of the platform, in order to accustom them to the surroundings, and carefully guarded them against anything that might agitate, grieve or irritate them, or that might upset their required spiritual equilibrium. Believing that being well fed the donkeys would be better qualified to concentrate and appreciate the singing, he fed them energetically and, with the advice of a physician, he secretly put considerable doses of bromide and other soothing medicines into their feed.

His efforts were crowned with success. On Sunday the nice-looking, carefully cleaned little donkeys, with their small, childlike feet and their pensive, even mournful eyes, looked rather like a group of transformed angels than obstinate, coarse animals; overcome with bromide and too much food, they ceased braying. Only at sunrise on Sunday two or three of the donkeys expressed in painful sounds their loud greeting to the glorious luminary, thereby waking and slightly frightening Honoria.

As for Enrico Sparghetti, he carefully considered and prepared what might, in contradiction to Honoria's utilitarian cares, be called "the spiritual food" for the donkeys. Having gone over his entire rich repertoire, the artist decided on the following selections: The first part—something lyrical, amorous and plaintive, absorbing the soul in a cer-

tain magical and somewhat sad dream.

The second part, after a brief intermission, was to be a cascade of merry and triumphant sounds, playful songs, capricious trills, as if signifying the rising of the sun after a moonlit night and the twittering of birds; and at last, the third part was to be something resolute—a tragic outburst of the passion, of the sob of life, overcome by death, the weariness of eternal parting, of hopeless and bitter love, something that would make even a stone cry! And if the rocks that gathered about Orpheus have not yet entirely lost their capacity to move, they will come forward to greet, together with the others, the triumphant singer!

Sunday arrived. The concert was scheduled for the afternoon. The Spring sun was shining dazzlingly, when the invited audience took their seats, admiring the fabulous beauty of the park and waiting with bated breath for the appearance of their idol, Enrico Sparghetti.

The first four rows, reserved for the donkeys, were transformed into small neat stalls, upholstered with red velvet. When the animals, adorned with ribbons and long plumes, occupied the front places, the rest of the audience regarded them with a whisper of admiration; meek and pensive, their micelike glittering skin silvery under the rays of the sun, they looked magnificent! For any emergency, lest some of the donkeys might jump out too soon, they were fastened to their stalls with heavy silk cords.

And then, under the thunder of applause, Enrico Sparghetti appeared on the platform. He was somewhat pale, but resolute and handsome in his daring; as he related afterward, he had not experienced such nervousness when he appeared before emperors as he experienced this time. Responding to the applause with his usual low bow, he threw with light mockery, appreciated by the journalists, several kisses to the donkeys,

and with an apathetic expression on his face, ordered his accompanist to start.

Silence reigned.

At the very first sound of his bewitching voice, which transformed everything earthly into heavenly, the hearers were charmed. They forgot altogether about the donkeys, which had aroused such alarming curiosity at first; and when the first song was followed by the second and third, no one even noticed the touching thoughtfulness, the profound attention with which the donkeys were listening to the singer. But Enrico and Honoria were rejoicing, exchanging glances, and Enrico even whispered to his accompanist significantly:

"This is a triumph!"

"Si, signor!" answered the accompanist enthusiastically and meekly.

But it seemed that the silence of the donkeys was due to other reasons than the charm and fascination of Enrico's singing, for during the fourth song, the most pathetic romance, two donkeys suddenly commenced to bray—at first, as usual, as if helplessly choking and wailing, then raising their voices to the heights of an almost prophetic outcry and winding up with the same helpless and suffering exhaltations. This noise was so unexpected that the people in the rear, forgetting themselves, exclaimed: "Hush!" and Enrico, pale but polite, motioned to the accompanist to halt awhile and allow the donkeys to get through braying.

But as soon as Enrico opened his mouth again, instead of two, ten, then twenty donkeys brayed out of tune, their voices mingling and their thunderous outbursts drowning not only the softest pianissimo of the singer, but his most desperate forte. In vain did the agitated Enrico raise his voice and put all the power of expression into his fine mimicry—only at intervals, between the donkeys' braying, the people caught his heavenly trills, his sobs and his tears; now all the

four dozen donkeys, infected by one another, were braying as though it were the last judgment day.

Thus ended the first unsuccessful part of the program, amid the deathly silence of the offended admirers and the dying wailings of the donkeys.

"That's impossible!" said Enrico in his dressing-room, in tears, falling on the agitated Honoria's bosom. "My vocal chords have almost snapped! Were you able to hear me? I couldn't hear my own voice!"

"Of course I heard you, my poor friend. But I told you that donkeys—"

"Oh, leave me alone!" exclaimed Enrico. "But why do they start to bray just when I open my mouth, and stop when I stop? Do you hear? They are as quiet as angels now. How is that?"

Honoria answered irresolutely:

"Yes, they are silent. Evidently your singing does have an effect upon them, and as soon as—"

"But that is stupid. This way they can't hear anything! Ah, Honoria, the Brazilian Emperor sobbed over this very song!" exclaimed the singer bitterly, large diamond tears falling from his eyes. "And how I tried for their sake! I myself cried for these donkeys—that's something I never did even for the Queen of England. . . . Oh, I'll get even with them! Down with the lyrics—I'll give them drama, and then we shall see. I'll outsing them!"

"Spare your voice, Enrico, I implore you!" cried Honoria, supported by the sobbing accompanist, who said:

"Spare it, signor!"

"Did Orpheus spare his voice? No, I'll shout them! I'll outbray them, if there is no other way. Ring the bell!"

Amid the deathly silence of the people and the donkeys, he started the second part of the program. The people seemed agitated and fatigued, while the donkeys were fresh and

calm, as if they had just redeemed themselves. But this time again all of Enrico's efforts proved futile; having commenced to bray together at his first notes, the donkeys raised their voices to a pathetic pitch and it was hard to understand whence came so much mild power in these angelic little animals! They brayed like gushing lava, and in vain did the heavenly singer run up and down the stage, rising on tiptoe and reddening trying to outsing them—the audience saw only his open mouth, which seemed as silent as a well.

Taking advantage of a minute's pause, Enrico shouted to his accompanist:

"Look at that one, on the left side—he is quiet all the time!"

"Si, signor!"

"He will be my first pupil! Go ahead!"

"Si, signor!"

Again the donkeys brayed in unison—and Oh, horrors!—they were now joined by the one that Enrico had just hoped to have as his first pupil. This donkey proved to be the loudest of them all—incomparable in his braying power—so that any further contest became impossible without endangering the life and death of the people present. Full of fresh power and vigor, this donkey easily drowned the voice of Enrico, who had already grown hoarse, while the rest of the chorus kept painfully tearing away and choking themselves with their own voices. Then over the flowers and the seats appeared drivers with

sticks, led by Honoria, who was also shouting.

Thus ended Enrico Sparghetti's contest with Orpheus, and the invited guests departed in silence, while Enrico said to the terrified Honoria in a scarcely audible tone:

"Honoria, send for the doctor. I think my voice is ruined!"

IV

FORTUNATELY, it was a false alarm. Within a month the fatigued voice of the famous singer regained its former glory and power. At the same time, thanks to the efforts of Honoria, the incident was explained in a manner flattering to the singer. The magazines in unison attributed the incessant braying of the donkeys to the fact that they were delighted and overcome with the magnificent bel canto of the great artist. And the name of Orpheus was forever linked with Enrico's name.

Enrico himself, smiling, said that donkeys were good for transporting burdens and doing other hard work, but as auditors they left much to be desired, and that whoever wanted to shout a donkey was insane.

Thus fine and radiant, he jested with his friends. But no one knew, not even Honoria, that for the rest of his life his soul suffered from disappointment, and the sight of a peaceful little donkey, industriously carrying a burden, made him quiver and aroused in him a sensation akin to panicky terror.



SOME love affairs are like "literary" dramas. They read a whole lot better than they act.



The Cry

By Lizette Woodworth Reese

I WOULD take these days—
Nothings of light and gust—
Within my two wild hands,
And tear them into dust!

Houses are naught to me,
Or round spiced cakes to eat;
Or yarrow in the field;
Or neighbors on the street;

Or books, or frocks, or gold,
Or ships, or pools, or bees,
Or sheep-bells at the dusk,
Or tall, indifferent trees.

O none of these at all—
But a moment clear of smart
To run, to run to you,
And snatch you to my heart!



THE greatest disappointment a woman can suffer is to look in her husband's bureau drawer for letters from other women and find the ones she wrote him before marriage.



A MAN speaks of his wife in a tone denoting ownership. A woman speaks of her husband in a tone denoting a lease.



SOME kisses savor of familiarity. Some smack of it.



March 1922

The Theatre Grows Interesting

By George Jean Nathan

I

GALSWORTHY'S "Loyalties" is, in a manner of speaking, Schnitzler's "Professor Bernhardt" in evening dress. For all the English dramatist's strident counterpoint of theme that periodically drowns out the leading motif, his play is essentially a study of the attitude of Christian toward Jew and of Jew toward Christian, precisely as is the Austrian dramatist's. In this study, Galsworthy has achieved merely a very interesting scenario of what might be a very interesting play, where Schnitzler, pursuing directly the underlying stratum of theme without recourse to Galsworthy's elaborate though beguiling embroideries, has achieved the very interesting play itself. Both dramatists approach their basic theme, and handle it, in the same manner: neither, that is, takes sides. Or, more accurately, neither takes sides in the common theatrical meaning of that phrase. The result, in Schnitzler's case, is a dialectic melodrama with everything deleted but the talk. The result, in Galsworthy's, a talk with everything deleted but the dialectic melodrama.

For all the title with which Galsworthy has adorned his play, the question of loyalties has actually small sound bearing upon his story, and that story's development of his dramatic purpose. The divers species of loyalty—to race, to club, to profession, and so on—with which he engaulds what he believed otherwise, perhaps subconsciously, might have been too nude and too slender a theatrical play, are in reality but so many side-shows to the thematic performance that goes on in the big tent. That performance, as I have said, con-

cerns itself directly with the case of a rich young Jew who has been robbed at a house-party and with his attitude toward his Christian hosts and their guests and the attitude of the latter toward him as Jew. These two attitudes are dramatized in terms of melodrama—melodrama more or less adroitly screened from the critical eye with the smoke of philosophies bearing upon the various loyalties alluded to. But the underlying theme at all times embarrassingly pokes its bald head through the smoke, and leaves Mr. Galsworthy's composition interesting and holding in what is perhaps not strictly the interesting and holding manner in which he intended it should be.

This, of course, is gratuitous quibbling in so far as one speaks of the play as a theatre play; but it is not in so far as one seeks to put on Croce's whiskers and inquire into the author's intent and achievement and the manner in which he has pursued the former and negotiated the latter. Thus, were every blessed line dealing with the question of loyalty to this or to that cut out of the manuscript, that manuscript would be every bit as intelligible, every bit as soundly composed, every bit as reasonable, and every bit as much the entity as it is with the lines left in. They have, for all Mr. Galsworthy's adroitly manoeuvred and superficially convincing philosophic legerdemain, no more directly to do with his theme than the olio, for all its diverting numbers, had to do with the fore and after-pieces of the old burlesque show. They are to Mr. Galsworthy's manuscript, so to speak, what the college pundit's commentaries and footnotes are to Shakespeare, what Woodrow Wilson's polysyllables were

to his fundamental point of view, what the grand transformation scene is to "Uncle Tom's Cabin." They are, in a word, the Profound Note, the camouflage, the spectacular and spurious, albeit very effective, hokum. It is not loyalty to race that makes Mr. Galsworthy's Jew resent his erstwhile Christian friends' implied and outspoken criticism of him: it is merely the resentment that the same Jew would unquestionably feel under the same circumstances were he a Baptist and were the same friends to act toward him as they do. The reactions of Galsworthy's Jew De Levis to the Christian characters in the play are at bottom exactly the reactions, say, of Henry Arthur Jones' Christian father-hero to the other Christian characters in "Saints and Sinners": loyalty to race or creed has utterly nothing to do with them. It is, further, not the loyalty to corps and club that brings Galsworthy's Lord St. Erth, General Canynge and their colleagues to act as they do; it is merely that they are dealing with a man so ill-mannered and personally so offensive that he would be kicked out of Jack's restaurant by a bouncer who didn't even know the meaning of the word corps, vaguely believing it to have something to do with an apple, and who, in the matter of clubs, didn't know the difference between a Racquet and a shillelah. Again, it is not loyalty to profession that makes Galsworthy's lawyer give up the case of Captain Dancy when he learns that his client has lied to him: it is simply that the lawyer has a sufficiently good head to know that his case for the defense has gone absolutely to pieces and that there isn't anything else he or his client can do. To suggest that it is loyalty to his profession that influences his course is to ask us to believe that he is a shyster and an idiot, which distinctly and clearly is what Galsworthy asks us specifically not to believe.

The subject need not further be gone into. The matter of loyalties is dragged into the play proper by the tail. It is, as I have said, popularly beguiling but

it is neither critically nor thematically sound. To argue the contrary is to argue that Brahms' trio for pianoforte, violin and 'cello would be greatly improved in the matter of force were a mellifluous cornet added to it. Galsworthy has written a duet for Jew and Christian and sought to make it more musical by lugging in a number of individually persuasive but still jointly extrinsic and somewhat disturbing philosophic saxophones.

All this is, of course, a tribute to Mr. Galsworthy's conscious or unconscious, witting or unwitting, showmanship. He very sensibly hasn't written his play for critics, but for paying audiences. And he knows that the way to draw persons into a theatre is to make other persons—deadheads like myself, for example—talk about his play. In this he has, in at least this one instance, succeeded, and beautifully. I salute him for it, and invite him to sample my cellar.

The play is moderately well, if economically, acted. The cast of twenty characters is made by a prudent, hausfrau producer to double—and even triple—with the zeal and assiduity of a Fregoli or a Henri De Vries. The business is a trifle confusing. To observe a cabot one minute as a lowly police inspector and the next as a great lawyer, to observe another now as an English butler and then as an Italian merchant, and to observe still a third in the first act as a servant, in the second as a clubman of fashion, and in the last as a clerk in a law office—his face exactly the same on all three occasions—is to experience a theatrical delirium tremens.

II

It is not, as is so often argued, the theme of such a typical French play as Bataille's "La Tendresse" that is psychically and emotionally alien to the American; it is, rather, the characters. This is not the contradiction in terms that superficially it seems to be. Any American—even a Methodist bootlegger

—can comprehend, and very clearly, a theme such as this wherein an old man, betrayed by his young mistress, finds in her sympathy and tenderness toward him a soothing and permanent warrant for forgiveness; but what the American, by virtue of his very soul, cannot comprehend is the manner in which and the processes by which such an old man, as a Frenchman sees and appraises him, conducts himself in the working out of the theme and, more important still, thinks his way to its conclusion.

Were an American dramatist to take exactly the same theme that Bataille has taken and were he to work it out in exactly the same way, his central character would yet be very much different from the French dramatist's. Though the theme would remain the same at bottom, the ratiocinations and conduct of the hero would—chiefly in externals but to no small degree in internals as well—differ radically from the French hero's. Place, in real life, a Frenchman and an American in precisely the same situation, and each—though he may eventually bring up at the same point—will act and think out his way to that point wholly unlike the other. It is the same, plainly enough, with the Frenchman and American when they are set into drama. There are, for example, hundreds of American men who have experienced in real life such a situation as comprises a French drama like—shall we say?—"Amoureuse"; just as there are hundreds of Frenchmen who have experienced it. But it is extremely doubtful that a single one of them has thought it out and brought it to its conclusion as the hero Etienne, reflecting the hundreds of Frenchmen, has. And this, for all the fact that the conclusion has been, in the cases of both these Americans and Frenchmen, in actual life exactly the same. Thus, while the American theatre audience finds the average French dramatic theme perfectly intelligible, the same audience finds the personages who manipulate the theme completely unfamiliar and almost grotesquely strange. This is once again

the case, as I have noted, with the Bataille play under discussion. The theme is universal, but the characters are as isolatedly French as Reutlinger's photographs, Regine Flory's lingerie and the advertisements in a boulevard *châlet de nécessité*.

Specifically, "La Tendresse," though the work of a not maladroit surgeon of amour, suffers—as does most of Bataille's drama—from an excess of theatricality. It touches life, but as one touches wet paint: with staccato uncertainties and quick withdrawals. Some of the paint of actuality clings to the dramatist's fingers, but for the most part those fingers remain the immaculate ones of the deliberate theatrician, their nails glistening resplendently with the obvious polish of grease paint. The play, further, drags unconscionably, at least to the American eye and ear. Every emotion, every argument, every situation, is as prolonged as the bottom of a Frenchman's trousers. Mr. Henry Miller is as effective in the central rôle as that rôle permits him to be, and Miss Ruth Chatterton is better than ever she has been in the first difficult rôle of her career, that of the *belle amie*.

III

THE first thing that one has a right to expect of a theatre operated and directed by actors is acting. The play may be poorly selected; the scenic outfitting and lighting may be not what they should be; the water in the smoking-room filter may be warm and muddy: one may understand and even overlook all of such things. But the acting must be, if not considerably better than that of the rival commercial manager's theatre, surely—in the leading rôles, anyway—at least as good. An actors' theatre that offers incompetent acting is of a piece with a commercial theatre that offers an incompetent business management. And this is the position in which the lately inaugurated Actors' Equity Theatre, judging it from its first exhibition, finds itself.

The initial play is one of the more

serious efforts of the Seville Quintero team, "Malvaloca": a dignified if more or less inveterate and heavy retelling of the tale of the seduced peasant girl who later on finds upper-case Love and, with it, the stereotyped psychic alarms and excursions. Throughout the fable there runs an allegorical counterpoint concerning the recasting of a cracked bell. The allegory also runs relevantly and insistently as counterpoint to the way the fable is acted by the Equity company, for if ever a play was cracked and in sore need of recasting it is this one. Miss Jane Cowl in the first two acts dresses the rôle of the crude Andalusian peasant as if it were something by von Suppe or Balfe, and in the last like an understudy to Dolores in the "Follies"—acting the rude wench of Las Canteras in a manner that is a cross between "The Bohemian Girl" and "Boccaccio" on the one hand and "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" on the other. Miss Cowl, save for a sarcastic expectoration or two negotiated with an obvious and very tony disrelish, makes the Quinteros' vulgar heroine as *distinguée* as a Hickson model. Mr. Rollo Peters does not bother to act at all, concerning himself mainly with an assiduous effort at "natural charm" and "lovable boyishness." Mr. Frederic Burt, in the third of the central rôles, is no more suited to the rôle of the uncouth and cynical first lover than I am to the rôle of Falstaff. And the rest of the company, save in a few distinctly minor rôles, provides the manuscript with an equal disharmony. The Actors' Equity Association may be entirely proficient and successful in the matter of compelling Mr. Joe Gaite to pay for the pink stockings worn by Miss Florrie Biernbaum of the "Sophie's Sofa" company and in compelling Mr. Gus Hill to give the interpreters of Mutt and Jeff the same contract that another manager gives Forbes-Robertson and Sarah Bernhardt, but the Actors' Equity Association does not, again judging it from this, its first professional effort, seem to be either proficient or successful in compelling its members to act.

IV

IN W. Somerset Maugham's "East of Suez" I can see little but the stereotyped tale of hot kisses and adultery played in front of a Chinese backdrop. There is small trace of Maugham in the manuscript, at least in the manuscript as it is locally presented. British Local No. 14 of my private spy system informs me that the original manuscript, as presented virginally in London, differs in detail from that put on here by Monsignor Woods, and this, if true, may account for the weakness of the impression one gains from it. As it stands at the Eltinge Theatre, it is nothing more than an expensive yellow-back in which a Eurasian Theda Bara goes through the familiar chaise longue, couch, sofa and other booboir alarms, brings her remorseful lover to pot himself in the head, and winds up by putting on one of Madame Francis' \$350 kimonos, heaving a sigh and bellyaching that her Chinese blood has got the better of her and that China has again claimed its own. Miss Florence Reed plays the half-caste heroine convincingly. The supporting company, including the Messrs. John Halliday, Geoffrey Kerr and Leonard Mudie, is a good one, save in the instances of Howard Lang and Miss Catherine Proctor in Chinese rôles. The latter are approximately as Chinese as two dill pickles.

V

"ON THE STAIRS," by William Hurlbut, is a mystery play. I have already written so much about mystery plays that I have nothing more to say about them. This one is a very poor specimen. Arnold Daly ought to be ashamed of himself for wasting his talent upon such drivel. He has observed, by way of extenuation, that "after all, an actor has to make a living." Quite right, so far as it goes. But an actor can't make much of a living out of such a play. Such plays are so bad that they are doomed to more or less early evaporation. The way for an actor to make a

living—whether the actor be Mr. Daly or some ignoble interpreter of butlers—is to confine himself, in so far as the gods permit him, to respectable manuscripts. For one Frank Bacon or William Hodge with money in the sock—to quote the debaters for the negative—there are a dozen Mantells, Sotherns, Barrymores, Drews, Adamses, Leibers, Anglins, Atwills and Reichers who aren't noticeably starving to death either.

VI

THE home-made two-by-four prune tart, awarded monthly by this department to the most profound piece of dramatic piffle displayed within the period, is herewith presented to Dr. Louis K. Anspacher for his chef d'œuvre, "That Day." I further tap Dr. Anspacher upon the head with my sword, bid him rise, and bequeath upon him the title of Duke, the riband of the Order of Port du Salut, First Class, and the key to the city of Otts Mills, Louisiana. Nor is this all. In addition, I declare that forthwith Dr. Anspacher shall be privileged to go abroad, without passport, whenever he so wills it, that he shall be privileged to wear the pigtail and flowered robes of the Celestial House of O-Fui, and that his horses shall henceforth be decorated with the imperial purple plume. Nor is even this sufficiently handsome. I continue, and decree that Dr. Anspacher be given the Royal Boston Garter, that he shall ride in all parades in the equipage of State, that, upon his approach, the k. k. Marine Band shall play the national anthem, and that he shall be provided with the eight handsomest creoles in my harem. But hold! These are but snide rewards for so triumphant a fellow. I therefore add to them. I command Dr. Anspacher to sit at all banquets of State on my right hand; I bequeath upon him the title and uniform of major-general of the Campfire Girls of America; and I give him the hand of the Crown Princess Gunda in wedlock. Arise, Duke, and have a cigar.

"That Day" is the prime wienerwurst

of the dramatic season. There is nothing in it from beginning to end. It is as stilted as the Toonerville trolley trestle; it is as far behind the times as last week's bath; it is as empty as a box in the Park Theatre.

VII

HAUPTMANN'S fine tragedy "Rose Bernd" in the generally eloquent Lewisoohn translation, an admirable performance of the leading rôle by Miss Ethel Barrymore, an obediently tactful scenic background by Robert Edmond Jones, the intelligent direction of Arthur Hopkins, and Alan Dale's more or less habitual idiotic review of the proceedings have served in combination auspiciously to launch the Longacre Theatre on its promised career of repertoire. In "Rose Bernd" Hauptmann presents himself in the light of a Silesian Ibsen. With a technique as sharp and certain as that of the august Henrik and with much of the remarkable insight into and sympathy with human character that have made him the foremost of living dramatists, Hauptmann has fashioned this tragedy of a peasant girl's seduction, vicious pursuit and final undoing, together with the allied tragedy that these work upon those who surround her, into a specimen of philosophic dramatic art which, if considerably below his high level, yet occupies a definite niche in the theatre. To the rôle of Rose, Miss Barrymore brings a new and surprising resource: her performance, save perhaps in the exaggeration of the last act scene of confession, marks the top rung of her achievement. McKay Morris is a good Streckmann, but the rest of the support is exceedingly weak. William B. Mack sucks in and blows out the lines of the pious father's rôle as if it were a somewhat bitter stogie. As Mrs. Flamm, Miss Doris Rankin embalms each of her speeches in the hoarse voice of a lady undertaker. Dudley Digges, badly miscast as Flamm, plays him like an English actor in a provincial company of "The Duke of Killicrankie." And Charles Francis, as Rose's timid and unworldly

young lover, steps directly out of a novel by Rupert Hughes. There is tremendous room for improvement in any such company that aspires to difficult and important repertoire. But the exhibit, taken from every other angle, is a credit to the American theatre and a further tribute to the unmistakably fine ideals of our most important producing figure.

VIII

MONCKTON HOFFE'S "The Faithful Heart"—further to indulge in my irritating custom of dredging up Continental plays and employing them as parallels—is, in philosophical point of view and in a certain direction of theme, a British version of de Caillavet's and de Flers' celebrated comedy "Papa," presented locally a few seasons ago as "Transplanting Jean." The adjective British is, however, on this occasion not used disparagingly. For, although Hoffe has sentimentalized divers turns of his theme where the Frenchmen left in them their inherent satiric flavour, the English playwright has yet exercised his sentiment so shrewdly and intelligently that the paraphrase remains convincing and agreeable. As a comedy of pure sentiment, indeed, "The Faithful Heart" presents itself as uncommonly sane and, if I may risk the seeming paradox, disillusioned. The sentiment is, save in two instances, always sharp, clear-cut and masculine: like the sentiment of "Old Heidelberg" as opposed to the sentiment of, say, such a cheap and obvious tear-wringer as "Peg-o'-My-Heart."

The best part of Hoffe's writing in this case lies in an easy, natural and persuasive avoidance of the theatrically expected. His so-called dialogical "twists" are not the yokel twists of the dramaturgy of commerce—the turn-about dramatic shenanigans wherein a character says not what is under the circumstances sensible and logical, but what is merely speciously surprising—they are the result of an appraisal of normal human beings when their mouths are open as against the usual appraisal of normal

human beings when the box-office is open. Now and again, notably in the over-emphasizing of his hero's nobility of soul and in the molasses-smear of an epilogue, the author is the same Hoffe who turned on the marmalade spigot in "The Little Damsel" and one or two other theatrical pieces of a stripe, but in general the Hoffe that is here revealed is a fellow with a genuine and pleasing gift for sound and tender comedy. The acting company is, with the exception of Tom Nesbitt in the rôle of the father of the illegitimate girl, capable—in the instance of young Miss Flora Sheffield especially so. Nesbitt obediently poses himself against tables, modishly inserts a 'kerchief into his cuff, speaks with his palm pressed tastily against his appendix, softens his voice wistfully when his lines call for sentiment, and does everything else duly expected of him by producer, author and audience but act. He reads his lines—save in the prologue, wherein he is very good—much as if they were the lesser and readily dispensable part of the rôle entrusted to him.

IX

IN "R. U. R.," the Czecho-Slovakian Karel Capek has fashioned a sociological and economic melodrama that engages the interest more for its shrewdly contrived melodrama than for its accompanying observations on sociology and economics. These latter are often dubious; the melodrama is always forthright and authentic. Five or six years ago the local Dr. Robert H. Davis wrote a short play that successfully made the rounds of the Little Theatres. It was called "Efficiency" and dealt with the manufacture of a mechanical creature that was able to do man's work in the world—then the work of war—and that eventually became so powerful that it fell upon its human creator and devoured him. This idea, hardly a virginal one even when Dr. Davis tackled it, is elaborated by Capek into a full-length play that ingeniously controls the attention for two acts, partly loses its

grip in the third, and lets go entirely in a poorly imagined and badly executed epilogue. This is due, I venture to say, to the author's failure clearly to think out the theme he initially poses. He begins on one note, the economical; he progresses to another, the sociological; he crosses this with still a third, the æsthetic; and then he lets the three philosophical billiard balls, already hazardously balanced on the tip of his nose, fall with a clatter by trying to top them with a fourth, dealing with the spiritual. What begins dexterously as tragedy thus ends as vitiating farce, save one be of the amiable critical school that finds in every allegory, simply because it is allegory, a sufficient apologia for tangled perceptions. It is easy enough to defend Capek's point of view for him by reading hospitable satiric clarities into his theme and the manner in which he has manœuvered it—the Theatre Guild program very graciously helps out the lazy ones in this direction—but drama soundly composed, while sometimes calling for interpretation, never calls for this kind of vaudeville mind-reading. Capek strikes me as a case of a Jules Verne who would a John Stuart Mill be. The Verne is consistently excellent; the Mill largely bogus. The fantastic melodrama is sound theatre; the rest is a mixture of Walter Lippman and Emile Coué. The spiritual awakening of Capek's machine-men in the play's epilogue is a mere pseudo-philosophic "grand transformation" finale such as used to wind up the old Hanlon and Charles Yale extravaganzas in a blaze of tinsel glory.

The exhibit is, in the main, nicely managed. Philip Moeller's direction and Lee Simonson's scenic adornments are very good indeed. Basil Sydney and Miss Kathlene MacDonell head a company that, save in one instance, draws the full value out of the manuscript.

The exception is Louis Calvert. This Mr. Calvert is generally regarded as a very good actor. If Mr. Calvert is a very good actor, I am Johann Sebastian Bach.

X

"THE YANKEE PRINCESS," née "Die Bajadere," is notable for Kalmann's unusually fine score, of which it is estimated the tuneful "Bajadere" melody alone has served in Germany and Austria as the accompaniment to no less than seven million seidels of beer and an equal number of *eis-chocoladen*. I strongly recommend the sweet sounds to your ear. It will by them be mellowed and made nobler. The "Revue Russe" is more Russian vaudeville. My personal preference is for Williams and Wolfus. "Dolly Jordan" is a tiresome semi-biographical play about the sexually congenial English actress of that name, confected by B. Iden Payne and inspired only, during its short run, by a very capable performance of the leading rôle by Miss Josephine Victor. "Queen of Hearts" is an assemblage of music show stencils presided over by Miss Nora Bayes.

"Swiftly," by John Peter Toohey and Walter Percival, is dull, dull stuff, not worth reviewing. "To Love" is Paul Géraldy's "Aimer," about which I shall have more to say on another day. Suffice it for the moment to note that it is as intelligent and acute a plumbing of cardiac katzenjammer as has come out of France in the last half dozen years. It is, indeed, so intelligent that its purely theatrical value is considerably impaired. The stage is not the place for consistent and resolute intelligence. The stage is the place, rather, for a deft and sagaciously deceptive simulacrum of intelligence. E.g., the Capek play herein described.



The Monthly Feuilleton

By H. L. Mencken

I

Cuba in Stained Glass

BOOTH the admirers and the dispraisers of Joseph Hergesheimer will discover stuff to their liking in his last book, *The Bright Shawl* (*Knopf*), a long short story rather than a novel. The former will find it almost as lush and satisfying as "Cytherea" or "Java Head"—a glittering, polychromatic fabric of gaudy images and apt, lascivious phrases. The latter will be caressed and delighted by the naïve tautology of "*the El Louvre*." Hergesheimer emits this startling cigar-box-label Spanish at least eight times in his book. He seems determined to rub the thing in—to let no enemy of his style, however lethargic, go unaware of his howler. It is a chance that the apostles of a pure, cut-glass æsthetic will not fail to seize. I myself, though I can tolerate the baroque (and even the *Norddeutscher-Lloyd*, 1890) manner in English, am tempted to discharge at least a "Pfui!" But hard by one of those pathological the-els I encounter "the silvery aloofness of his ideal." And a page or two farther on, being bidden to stand in the dim Havana cathedral and look out, I find "a segment of the day, like a white explosion of powder." Here, I make bold to say, is juicy stuff; here are some very nice phrases. The fellow, indeed, knows how to write, however badly he may occasionally do it. Would it offend the proprieties if I described "*The Bright Shawl*" as an elaborate and ornate mosaic, rich especially in all the deeper, more mysterious tones of red, violet and gold—with here and there a wad of chewing-gum stuck upon it?

The story itself is slight enough—the melancholy reminiscence of a middle-aged American who went to Cuba in the electric days of Spanish rule, and there sought to help the revolutionists achieve *Cuba libre*. The picture, I suspect, is not inaccurate: Hergesheimer, whatever his failings in philology, is a painstaking archeologist. One steps into a tense society of sallow, whispering, impracticable youths—all ready to die gloriously for the cause, but none suffering from any appreciable excess of common sense. Outside, the frizzling, raucous sunshine, or the velvet shadows of the night! A scene already obviously operatic before a word is uttered. What goes on is chiefly tragic farce: the poor boys snared by gorgeous harlots, and then unromantically butchered by the matter-of-fact Spaniards. All of Howard Gage's bright, particular friends succumb. Some are so easy that their removal is almost a routine matter; others resist everything save the full force of the political seraglio. Needless to say, Hergesheimer presents brilliant portraits of the officiating ladies. One of them is a Spanish dancer who gets half converted to the patriot cause—an accident familiar enough in the higher politics. Another is partly Chinese: it is she who finishes the little group and forces Gage himself to leave Cuba between days. Upon this poisonous Oriental Hergesheimer lavishes all the colors on his palette. She is a figure from Sevres, a vase of cloissoné, a museum piece. Nevertheless, she moves. Where Hergesheimer found her, God knows. She exists somewhere, I suppose, in porcelain or amber, as Cytherea exists in bisque and silk. I forget her name.

I doubt that the *Privat Dozenten* of 1975 will put "The Bright Shawl" in the main canon of Hergesheimer's works. It lacks the spaciousness of "Java Head," the tight organization of "The Three Black Pennies," the ironical force of "The Lay Anthony," the unceasing brilliance of "Cytherea." But for all that it is thoroughly Hergesheimerean. No other American novelist could have imagined the story; none other could have lifted it, in the telling, out of sentimentality and worse. Here, precisely, lies the achievement of the man: he has rehabilitated romance by translating it into visual images. No need to say that he began life as a painter. I suppose it was defective draftsmanship that made him give up the brush; his drawing, even in his books, is often defective. But what gorgeous color he gets into them! How beautifully he plays with light! This is a talent that the American novel cried for. For years past it has tended to become more and more flat, drab and photographic. Now comes Hergesheimer with skyrockets! To science he adds a civilized sensuousness. His world is a world of rich brocades, soft silks, shimmering glass, noble patinas. It is something to have revealed this world to a moral Republic.

II

More Katzenjammer

IN "Three Soldiers" John Dos Passos exhibited the disillusionment of the soldier in the field; in "The Last Mile" (*Doubleday*) Frank Macallister exposes the disillusionment of the soldier come home. The two form parts of a continuing narrative, the end of which is not yet. What we have, in brief, in America is a younger generation that has been taught to view democracy as the answer to all human riddles—and that gradually begins to realize that it is simply, at bottom, a degraded swindle. The victim in the present case is Lieut. Ralph Broadhurst. He goes to the war full of a fine resolve to sweat and suffer for human freedom; he swiftly discovers that the only actual beneficiaries

will be a small class of rogues and usurers. Then he comes back determined to put down this infamy by political means, *i. e.*, to rouse the plain people, organize them into a *bloc* of virtue, and drive the money-changers out of the temple. A naïve and romantic fellow, he is carried by this high resolve into the orbit of the so-called Committee of 48, and becomes a delegate to the historic third-party convention at Chicago. There, of course, he quickly discovers that two-thirds of the heaven-kissing idealists in the new party are simply idiots and that most of the remainder are shysters. He comes back to New York almost completely purged of patriotic and moral passion. He has made the great discovery that the only way to purify democracy is with an axe.

The book is full of fine plausibility. It seems to me that the United States must be full today of just such fellows as Broadhurst. Mr. Macallister avoids the easy error of making him a superior and sniffish fellow. He is simply a young American of ordinary decency who, after having been bamboozled by Woodrow and company, desires to head off and prevent a similar bamboozling of the next generation. If he departs from the norm, it is only in the fact that he is intelligent enough to recognize the hopelessness of the enterprise—that is, by the traditional political means. The rest moan and struggle on. Beaten today, they hope for better luck tomorrow. When all other schemes fail they fall back upon the plan of "educating" the masses. But this plan, I am convinced, is the worst of them all. Our politics will never be raised to a civilized level by educating the masses; as well try to prevent dog-fights by training dogs in evangelical theology. The only feasible means of relief lies in developing devices for curbing and checkmating the masses—above all, for benevolently fooling them. We must invent a new demagoguery to counteract the old demagoguery. Is the scheme immoral and against God? Not so fast! Precisely the same scheme was put into effect by the early Christian Fathers.

III

Private Reflections

THE longer I live the more thoroughly I become convinced that criticism is anything but an exact science. The things I remember chiefly, looking back over my own somewhat longish service in the critical trenches, are not my occasional sound judgments, but my far more frequent imbecilities—some of them, seen in retrospect, quite astounding. I have often misunderstood men grossly, and I have misrepresented them when I understood them, sacrificing sense to make a phrase. Here, of course, is where even the most conscientious critic often goes aground; he is apt to be an artist before he is a scientist, and the impulse to create something passionately is stronger in him than the impulse to state something accurately. As for me, I am not noticeably conscientious. But I do not apologize for the lack. Is any other critic now in practise in America? I can recall none. Certainly those who, in the exercise of their office, perform upon my own books are not much better in this respect than I am. A good many of them denounce me violently, simply because they disagree with my politics. Others, less prejudiced, fall into profound errors as to my aims, and credit me constantly with ideas that are as abhorrent to me as they would be to a Methodist bishop. What is the remedy for this distressing piling up of nonsense? Perhaps the best way out would be for every writer to attempt a clear statement of his own ideas, confining himself to fundamentals. The thing is often done by painters and sculptors. I have before me half a dozen catalogues of art exhibitions by new men—one-man shows of novel stuff. Each of the exhibitors prints a preface over his sign manual explaining just what he is about—often, alas, somewhat muddily, for artists seldom know how to write, but always earnestly and sometimes even indignantly. I find such expositions very interesting and instructive. Even when one of them is downright idiotic it at least sets forth the

useful fact that the author is an idiot.

As for me, my literary theory, like my politics, is based chiefly upon one main idea, to wit, the idea of freedom. I am, in brief, a libertarian of the most extreme variety, and know of no human right that is one-tenth as valuable as the simple right to utter what seems (at the moment) to be the truth. Take away this right, and none other is worth a hoot; nor, indeed, can any other long exist. Debauched by that notion, it follows necessarily that I can be only an indifferent citizen of a democratic state, for democracy is grounded upon the instinct of inferior men to herd themselves in large masses, and its principal manifestation is their bitter opposition to all free thought. In the United States, in fact, I am commonly regarded as a violent anti-patriot. But this is simply because most of the ideas upon which American patriotism bases itself seem to me to be obviously sentimental and nonsensical—that is, they have, for me at least, no intelligible relation to the visible facts. I do not object to patriotism when it is logically defensible. On the contrary, I respect it as a necessary corollary to the undeniable inequality of races and peoples. Its converse, internationalism, appears to me to be almost insane. What an internationalist says, stripping it of rhetoric, is simply that a lion is no more than a large rat.

My literary criticism has been almost exclusively devoted to attacking and trying to break down the formal ideas, most of them wholly devoid of logical content, which formerly oppressed the art of letters in the United States very severely, and still hang about its flanks—ideas of form and method, of aim and purpose, of mere fashion and propriety. This attack, carried on for many years, has got me the name of a mere professional ruffian: I am constantly accused, and sometimes quite honestly, of tearing down without building up, of murdering a theory without offering in its place a new and better theory. But it must be plain enough that the objection, however earnestly made, is quite without merit. My business, considering the

state of the society in which I find myself, has been principally to clear the ground of mouldering rubbish, to chase away old ghosts, to help set the artist free. The work of erecting a new structure belongs primarily to the artist as creator, not to me as critic. It may be (and, alas, it is often the case!) that after he has been set free it turns out that he actually has nothing worth hearing to say. (I could name names, but refrain in decency). But it is certainly better to utter even nonsense as a free man than to keep on repeating formulæ like a boy in school.

Here the astute reader may file a caveat: if I am so hot for freedom, then why do I belabor fellows whose sole crime, at bottom, is that they express their honest ideas in a banal and oleaginous manner? The answer is simple: it is not their sole crime. I do not belabor them for expressing their own ideas; I belabor them for trying to prevent other men expressing *theirs*—that is, for trying to set up standards and taboos that hinder the free play of the creative impulse. This effort seems to me to be intrinsically immoral, however exalted the purpose behind it. The essence of sound art is freedom. The artist must be allowed his impish impulse, his revolt, his perversity. He stands in fundamental opposition to Philistine correctness; if he is bound by it he is nothing. But I by no means engage to agree with him: all I ask is that no one oppose him with weapons foreign to the world he inhabits, *e.g.*, the ballot, the policeman's club, the schoolmaster's rattan, the bishop's mitre. I am even against proscriptions on purely æsthetic grounds. Thus when Miss Lowell and her friends essayed to set up the doctrine that the only decent way to write poetry was the way they personally wrote it, and that all exponents of other ways were ignoramuses—when this theory appeared in the learned groves and barber-shops I joined the professors in opposing it. But the great majority of such attacks upon freedom are not made by revolutionists, but by advocates of an estab-

lished order: for one Futurist who launches bulls like a pope there are a hundred pedagogues who issue proscriptions like an American Attorney-General—for one Miss Lowell there are whole herds of Comstocks. Thus my critical labors, in the main, have been on the side of the younger generation. I have protested *sforzando* against the schoolmastering of letters—against setting the artist in bondage to his inferiors. For this service, I am convinced, I shall be rewarded by a just and intelligent God when I have been translated from these sordid scenes. If it turns out that I am in error about it, then I confess frankly that I shall be very greatly disappointed.

IV

Conrad Revisited

I PUT in a blue afternoon last week re-reading Joseph Conrad's "Youth." A *blue* afternoon? What nonsense! The touch of the man is like the touch of Schubert. One approaches him in various and unhappy moods: depressed, dubious, despairing; one leaves him in the clear, yellow sunshine that Nietzsche found in Bizet's music. But here again the phrase is inept. Sunshine suggests the imbecile, barnyard joy of the human kohlrabi—the official optimism of a steadily delighted and increasingly insane Republic. What the enigmatical Pole has to offer is something quite different. If its parallel is to be found in music, it is not in Schubert, but in Beethoven—perhaps even more accurately in Johann Sebastian Bach. It is the joy, not of mere satisfaction, but of understanding—the profound but surely not merry delight which goes with the comprehension of a fundamental fact—above all, of a fact that has been coy and elusive. Certainly the order of the world that Conrad sets forth with such diabolical eloquence and plausibility is no banal moral order, no childish sequence of virtuous causes and edifying effects. Rather it has an atheistic and even demoniacal smack: to the earnest Bible-student it must be more than a

little disconcerting. The God he visualizes is no loving papa in a house-coat and carpet-slippers, inculcating the great principles of Christian ethics by applying occasional strokes *a posteriori*. What he sees is something quite different: an extremely ingenious and humorous improvisatore and comedian, with a dab of red on his nose and maybe somewhat the worse for drink—a furious and far from amiable banjoist upon the human spine, and rattler of human bones. Kurtz, in “Youth,” makes a capital banjo for that exalted and cynical talent. And the music that issues forth—what a superb *Hexentanz* it is!

One of the curiosities of critical stupidity is the doctrine that Conrad is without humor. No doubt it flows out of a more general error: to wit, the assumption that tragedy is always pathetic, that death itself is inevitably a gloomy business. That error, I suppose, will persist in the world until some extraordinarily astute mime conceives the plan of playing “King Lear” as a farce—I mean deliberately. That it is a farce seems to me quite as obvious as the fact that “Romeo and Juliet” is another, this time lamentably coarse. To adopt the contrary theory—to view it as a great moral and spiritual spectacle, capable of purging and uplifting the psyche like marriage to a red-haired widow or a month in the trenches—to toy with such notions is to borrow the critical standards of a party of old ladies weeping over the damnation of the heathen. In point of fact, death, like love, is intrinsically farcical—a solemn kicking of a brick under a plug-hat—and most human agonies, once they transcend the physical—*i.e.*, the unescapably real—have far more of irony in them than of pathos. Looking back upon them after they have eased one seldom shivers: one smiles—perhaps sourly but nevertheless spontaneously. This, at all events, is the notion that seems to me to be implicit in every line of Conrad. I give you “Heart of Darkness” as the archetype of his whole work and the keystone of his metaphysical system. Here we have

all imaginable human hopes and aspirations reduced to one common denominator of folly and failure, and here we have a play of humor that is infinitely mordant and searching. Turn to pages 136 and 137 of the American edition—the story is in the volume called “Youth”—: the burial of the helmsman. Turn then to 178-184: Marlow’s last interview with Kurtz’s Intended. The farce mounts by slow stages to dizzy and breath-taking heights. One hears harsh roars of laughter, vast splutterings of transcendental mirth, echoing and re-echoing down the black corridors of empty space. The curtain descends at last upon a wild dance in a dissecting-room. The mutilated dead rise up and jig. . . .

It is curious, re-reading a thrice-familiar story, how often one finds surprises in it. I have been amazed, toward the close of “The End of the Tether,” to discover that the *Fair Maid* was wrecked, not by the deliberate act of Captain Whalley, but by the machination of the unspeakable Massy. How is one to account for so preposterous an error? Certainly I thought I knew “The End of the Tether” as well as I knew anything in this world—and yet there was that incredible misunderstanding of it, lodged firmly in my mind. Perhaps there is criticism of a sort in my blunder: it may be a fact that the old skipper willed the thing himself—that his willing it is visible in all that goes before—that Conrad, in introducing Massy’s puerile infamy at the end, made some sacrifice of inner veracity to the exigencies of what, at bottom, is somewhat too neat and well-made a tale. The story, in fact, belongs to the author’s earlier manner; I guess that it was written before “Youth” and surely before “Heart of Darkness.” But for all that, its proportions remain truly colossal. It is one of the most magnificent narratives, long or short, old or new, in the English language, and with “Youth” and “Heart of Darkness” it makes up what is probably the best book of imaginative writing that the English literature of the twentieth century can

yet show. Conrad has learned a great deal since he wrote it, true enough. In "Lord Jim," in "Victory," and, above all, in "A Personal Record" there are momentary illuminations, blinding flashes of brilliance that he was incapable of in those days of experiment; but no other book of his seems to me to hold so steadily to so high a general level—none other, as a whole, is more satisfying and more marvellous. There is in "Heart of Darkness" a perfection of design which one encounters only rarely and miraculously in prose fiction: it belongs rather to music. I can't imagine taking a single sentence out of that stupendous tale without leaving a visible gap; it is as thoroughly *durch komponiert* as a fugue. And I can't imagine adding anything to it, even so little as a word, without doing it damage. As it stands it is austere and beautifully perfect, just as the slow movement of the Unfinished Symphony is perfect.

I observe of late a tendency to examine the English of Conrad rather biliously. The folly is cultivated chiefly in England, where, I suppose, chauvinistic motives enter into the matter. It is the just boast of great empires that they draw in talents from near and far, exhausting the little nations to augment their own puissance; it is their misfortune that these talents often remain defectively assimilated. Conrad remains the Slav after all these years; the people of his tales, whatever he calls them, are always as much Slavs as he is; the language in which he describes them retains a sharp, exotic flavor. But to say that this flavor constitutes a blemish is to say something so preposterous that only schoolmasters and their dupes may be thought of as giving it credit. The truly first-rate writer is not one who uses the language as such dolts demand that it be used; he is one who reworks it in spite of their prohibitions. It is his distinction that he thinks in a manner different from the thinking of ordinary men; that he is free from that slavery to embalmed ideas which makes them so respectable and so dull. Obvi-

ously, he cannot translate his notions into terms of everyday without doing violence to their inner integrity: as well ask a Richard Strauss to funnel all his music into the chaste jugs of Prof. Dr. Jadassohn. What Conrad brings into English literature is a new concept of the relations between fact and fact, idea and idea, and what he contributes to the complex and difficult art of writing English is a new way of putting words together. His style amazes and irritates pedants because it does not roll along in the old ruts. Well, it is precisely that rolling along in the old ruts that he tries to avoid—and it is precisely that avoidance which makes him what he is. What lies under most of his alleged sins seems to me to be simple enough: he views English logically and analytically, and not through a haze of senseless traditions and arbitrary taboos. No Oxford mincing is in him. If he cannot find his phrase above the salt, he seeks it below. His English, in a word, is innocent. And if, at times, there gets into it a color that is strange and even bizarre, then the fact is something to rejoice over, for a living language is like a man suffering incessantly from small internal hemorrhages, and what it needs above all else is constant transfusions of new blood from other tongues. The day the gates go up, that day it begins to die.

A very great man, this Mr. Conrad. As yet, I believe, decidedly underestimated, even by many of his advocates. Most of his first acclaimers mistook him for a mere romantic—a talented but somewhat uncouth follower of the Stevenson tradition, with the orthodox cutlass exchanged for a Malay *kris*. Later on he began to be heard of as a linguistic and vocational marvel: it was astonishing that any man bred to Polish should write English at all, and more astonishing that a country gentleman from the Ukraine should hold a master's certificate in the British merchant marine. Such banal attitudes are now archaic, but I suspect that they have been largely responsible for the slowness with which his fame has

spread in the world. At all events, he is vastly less read and esteemed in foreign parts than he ought to be, and very few Continental Europeans have risen to any genuine comprehension of his stature. When one reflects that the Nobel Prize has been given to such third-raters as Knut Hamsun and Rabindranath Tagore, with Conrad disdainfully passed over, one begins to grasp the depth and density of the ignorance prevailing in the world, even among the relatively enlightened. One "Lord Jim," as human document and as work of art, is worth all the works produced by all the Hamsuns and Tagores since the time of Rameses II. It is, indeed, an indecency of criticism to speak of such

unlike things in the same breath : as well talk of Brahms in terms of Mendelssohn. Nor is "Lord Jim" a chance masterpiece, an isolated peak. On the contrary, it is but one unit in a long series of extraordinary and almost incomparable works—a series sprung suddenly and overwhelmingly into full dignity with "Almayer's Folly." I challenge the nobility and gentry of Christendom to point to another Opus 1 as magnificently planned and turned out as "Almayer's Folly." The more one studies it, the more it seems miraculous. If it is not a work of absolute genius then no work of absolute genius exists on this earth.



Rotted Wharves

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

BY pearl-lagoons where no more pearls are found,
 In still blue-misted bays where fever-dew
 Had palsied trade, there comes at times the sound
 Of timbers splashing down as seas sweep through.
 At rotted wharves the darkly tottering piles
 Sway in the sea like warning fingers black
 With plague, and shores look out on surging miles
 Where faded sails that never more came back.

Where strange adventures loaded precious ware,
 And holds that scented wonder took their freight,
 The tropic shadows in the sultry air
 Drift down the wharves that cannot bear their weight . . .
 It is a thing that dreams have known before
 Of cargoes gone and sails that come no more!





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How a Trip to Sunny Wales Uncovered a Secret that Forever Ends Need for a Complexion Beautifier

By MARTHA RYERSON

I HAVE brought to America the greatest news women ever heard about the skin. From Wales, where I spent a month without seeing a single bad complexion. I went there with a complexion that had been my despair since childhood.

One afternoon I left it in the hills; exchanged it for one of absolute purity and undoubted natural color. Here are the facts: About the first thing one notices in this southern English province is the uniformly beautiful complexions. The lowliest maid—and her mother, too—has a radiantly beautiful skin. Mine, lacking luster and color, with impurities nothing seemed to eradicate or even hide, was horribly conspicuous.

It was a happy thought that took me on a long walk through the hills one afternoon. I had stopped at the apothecary's to replenish my cosmetic—to find they did not have even a cold cream. In a land where beauty of face was in evidence at every turn—the women used no beautifiers! Do you wonder I "took to the hills"? I didn't want to see another peaches-and-creamy complexion that day. But I did.

At a house where I paused for a drink from the spring, I stepped back in surprise when the young woman straightened up to greet me. Her face was covered with mud. I recognized the peculiar clay of that section; very fine, sleek, smooth clay it was. Seeing my surprise, the girl smiled and said, "Madam does not clay?" I admitted I did not!

I Decide to "Clay"

She wet the clay which had dried on her face and neck, wiped it away, and stood in all the glory of a perfect complexion. I shall never again envy another as I did that stolid maiden of the hills. Her features were not pretty; they did not need to be. For no woman will ever have a more gorgeous skin. She explained that this amazing clay treatment did it. The natives made a weekly habit of "claying" the skin, quite as one cares regularly for the hair.

I was easily persuaded to try it. We tucked a towel over my blouse, and from the spring's bed she took the soft, soothing clay and applied it.

As the clay dried, I experienced the most delightful tingling in every facial pore; impurities were being literally pulled out. Half an hour more, and we removed the clay mask. I followed into the tiny house to glimpse myself in a mirror.

My blemishes were gone!

I fairly glowed with color that spread down the neck to the shoulders. My cheeks were so downy soft. Father's surprised look that evening was the most genuine compliment a woman ever received. In a basket, I had two crocks of the precious clay. I thought father's questions would never end; where did I find it? Could I take him to the spot? What was its action, and reaction? And lots else I didn't know. Father is a chemist.

Suddenly it dawned on me. He wanted to unearth the secret of that clay's amazing properties, and take it to America! For two weeks we stayed on; he worked all day at his "mud pies" as I called them. Back home at last in Chicago, he worked many weeks more. He experimented on me, and on all my girl friends. At last, he scientifically produced clay identical with that Welsh clay in its miraculous effects.

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News of the wonders performed by this clay has brought thousands of requests for it. Women, everywhere, are now supplied Forty Minute Clay. The laboratory sends it direct to the user. A jar is five dollars, but I have yet to hear of anyone who did not regard it worth several times that amount. For in over six hundred test cases, it did not once fail. It seems to work on all ages, regardless of how pimples, clogged or dull the skin.

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I accept your "No Profit" offer. Please send me a full-sized, regular \$5.00 jar of Forty Minute Beauty Clay at \$1.87, plus postage, which I will pay the postman on delivery. My money back unless only one application proves satisfactory.

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Genuine Diamonds Guaranteed

CASH OR CREDIT

THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT OF ALL—A GENUINE DIAMOND. WHY PAY MORE THAN LOFTIS ASKS

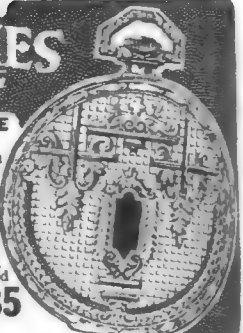
We import Diamonds direct from European markets and sell direct to you by mail. Our immense BUYING POWER is a great saving to you.

SEND FOR FREE CATALOG

There are over 2,000 bargains in Diamonds, Watches, Wrist Watches, Pearls, Mesh Bags, Silverware, etc. Select as many articles as you wish and have all charged in one account.

"Sylvie" Diamond Ring here shown, 18-k Solid White Gold, \$75. Wedding Ring, Platinum, \$25; solid gold, \$5 up. Wrist Watch, 18-k White Gold, 17 J., \$39; 14-k, 16 J., \$32.

17 JEWEL ELGIN—Open Face. Green Gold, engraved, guaranteed 25 years. 12 Size, gilt dial. Assorted patterns. Big value. **\$35**



Our Diamonds are magnificent blue white, perfect cut gems, set in Solid Gold and Platinum. Liberty Bonds Accepted.

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BROS. & CO. 1835

THE OLD RELIABLE ORIGINAL CREDIT JEWELERS
DEPT. G-620
106 N. State St., Chicago, Ill.
Stores in Leading Cities

CREDIT TERMS on all articles: One fifth down, balance divided into equal payments within eight months. Send for Catalog.

AGENTS \$6 a Day

Should be easily made selling our Concentrated Non-Alcoholic Food Flavors, Soaps, Perfumes and Toilet Preparations. Over 100 kinds, put up in collapsible tubes. Ten times the strength of bottle extracts. Every home in city or country is a possible customer. Entirely new. Quick sellers. Good repeaters. Not sold in stores. No competition. 100 per cent profit to agents. Little or no capital required. Elegant sample case for workers. Start now while it's new. Write today—a post card will do—for full particulars **FREE**

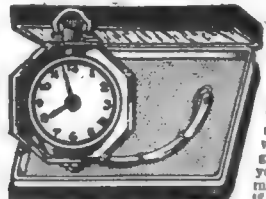


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BIRD MANNA

Is the great secret of the Andersburg. It will bring back the song of cage birds, will prevent their ailments, and restore them to good condition. If given during the season of shedding feathers it will carry the little musician through this critical period without loss of song. Mailed for 15c. in stamps, 120 page Bird Book 15c. or book and Manna 35c. Sold by all druggists. Small Bird Book Free. THE PHILA. BIRD FOOD CO.
No. 400 N. Third St., Philadelphia, Pa.



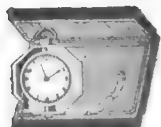
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10-jewel watch, 20-year gold filled case, \$8.49 only. This beautiful high-grade ladies' watch, octagon shape, guaranteed 10-jewel splendid movement, 30 year case, accurate timekeeper. The gold-filled bracelet is flexible and will fit any wrist. Sent in velvet and silk-lined box. Excellent gift. Send us money. Just send your name and address, pay postman \$8.49 on delivery. Money back if not satisfied. Write to-day

NEW YORK SALES CO., Dept. E-20, 21 Park Row, New York



Every Girl Can Have A
BRACELET WATCH



Absolutely
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No reason for anybody to be without one. Just send us your name and address and we will tell you how you can get one of these 7-jewel, 10-yr. guaranteed, gold filled Bracelet Watches. Comes in elaborate velvet box.

RUSH your name and address and we will tell you how to get this Bracelet Watch **ABSOLUTELY FREE**

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I know because I was Deaf and had Head Noises for over 30 years. My invisible Antiseptic Ear Drums restored my hearing and stopped Head Noises, and will do it for you. They are Tiny Megaphones. Cannot be seen when worn. Effective when Deafness is caused by Catarrh or by Perforated, Partially or Wholly Destroyed Natural Drums. Easy to put in, easy to take out. Are "Unseen Comforts," inexpensive. Write for Booklet and my sworn statement of how I recovered my hearing.

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\$2,800 in 2 HOURS!

What your Genuine Chinese Good Luck ring brought me. I say! My business and finances. Here, business and finances. Ours is the genuine and original ring stamped inside with that beloved by Ancients to bring Good Luck, Health, Happiness, Prosperity. Solid Sterling Silver. Price, Postpaid, Cash with order \$1.50, or C.O.D. \$1.00. The Zanzibar Co., Dept. 234 109 West 42nd St., N. Y. C.



MURINE Night and Morning. Have Clean, Healthy Eyes. If they Tired, Itch, Smart or Burn, if Sore, Irritated, Inflamed or Granulated, use Murine often. Soothes, Refreshes. Safest for Infant or Adult. At all Druggists. Write for Free Eye Book. Murine Eye Remedy Co., Chicago



FREE DIAMOND RING OFFER

Just to advertise our famous Hawaiian diamonds—the greatest discovery the world has ever known. We will send absolutely free this 14k gold 1/2 ring, set with a 1/2 Hawaiian im. diamond—in beautiful box postage paid. Pay postmaster \$1.00 C.O.D. charges to cover postage, handling, advertising, handling, etc. If you return it from a real diamond return and your money refunded. Only 10,000 given away. No money. Answer quick. Send no stamp. **KRAUTH & REED**
Dept. 414, Masonic Temple, Chicago

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"A vampire soul behind a lovely face"



SHE summoned her fiancé to her home in the night. She sent him away a raving maniac, loving her fiercely yet transfixed with horror at the very thought of her. A long convalescence and blessed forgetfulness! Suddenly he senses her malignant will. It leads him screaming into the darkness of the night. Why did men love this exquisite woman up to the eve of the wedding, and then, at a word from her, go mad? The mystery grips you—it is a mystery such as comes only from the pen of the greatest of mystery writers,

A. CONAN DOYLE

Did you know Doyle has a book for every mood? You may fight beside Sir Nigel or share the business villainies of Ezra Girdestone. In Fly Trap Gulch the huge man-eating plant awaits you; you are among the Nihilists; you are in Sassassa Valley with the fiend of a single eye. One of the world's

greatest love stories is Doyle's and one of the most stirring prize-fight tales. Fiction enough to last a year; and the Sherlock Holmes stories besides—all beautiful volumes. If you act at once they are yours.

Free—Six Wonderful Novels by E. Phillips Oppenheim

Master of the International Intrigue Story

For a few days only, those who send in the coupon, will receive free with the Doyle, in three compact volumes, six complete, stirring novels of E. Phillips Oppenheim—the master of amazing adventure in international intrigue, of weird situations in underworld and palace, of pathetic loves and struggles

among shifting scenes. Both Oppenheim and Doyle fascinate, grip the imagination, bring quick complete relaxation from every-day cares because they have written, not to moralize, or teach, but to bring pleasure. These six novels, costing \$12 when purchased in bookstores, are given away with the Doyle: *Master of Men*, *The Great Awakening*, *To Win the Love He Sought*, *The Yellow House*, *The New Tenant*, *A Daughter of Astrea*.

Send No Money— Just the Coupon

Thousands will read this offer. Some will act promptly. Others will say too late: "I might have owned these two fine sets, if only I had not waited too long." Don't have useless regrets. The two sets will come to you at once for free examination. Send no money; merely clip the coupon now.

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of pleasure and
thrill await you
in these books!*

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10 Novels

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36 Adventure Stories

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P. F. COLLIER & SON COMPANY
Mail Order Dept., 416 W. 13th St., New York

Send me on approval, charges paid by you, Conan Doyle's works in ten volumes, gold stamped. Also the three-volume set of Oppenheim bound in cloth. If I keep the books I will remit \$1.00 within a week and \$3.00 a month for eight months for the Conan Doyle set only, and retain the Oppenheim set without charge. Otherwise, I will within a week, return both sets at your expense. For the Conan Doyle, beautifully bound in three-quarter leather, simply add three more monthly payments; that is, eleven instead of eight, 10% discount for cash.

Check binding desired. Cloth ☐ 1/2 Leather ☐

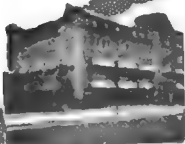
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Get This Wonderful Ring. If You Can Tell It From a Genuine Diamond Send It Back

These amazing, beautiful CORODITE diamonds positively match genuine diamonds in every way—same blinding flash and dazzling play of color, rainbow fire. They, alone, stand the diamond tests, including terrible and test of direct comparison. Lifetime experts need all their experience to see any difference. Prove this yourself.

Wear a Corodite Diamond 7 DAYS FREE

Make this test. You risk nothing. Wear a genuine Corodite and a diamond side by side on the same finger for 7 days. If you or your friends can tell the difference, send it back; you won't lose out a single penny. That's fair enough. If you keep the ring, price printed here is all you pay. No payments. Remember Corodites alone have the name-cutting advantages: No. 1—Ladies' Tiffany Style 14K Gold S. Ring \$2.84
No. 2—Gents' Heavy Solcher 14K Gold S. Ring \$3.48
No. 3—Gents' Massive Hexagon Gypsy Ring \$4.27
No. 4—Ladies' Hand-Carved Basket Setting, platinum finish \$3.96
No. 5—Ladies' Many Oranges Blossom Engraved \$3.54
Carat size gems. Beautiful mountings of most modern design. Choice of gold or latest white platinum finish. Unqualified 30-year guarantee. Some are in leather case free with each ring.

SEND NO MONEY

Keep your money right at home. Just send name, address and number of ring wanted and size as shown by slip of paper, form and to around finger joint. Your ring will come by return mail. When ring arrives deposit amount shown above with postman. If you decide not to keep ring after 7 days' wear, send it back and your money will be immediately returned. Send today.

E. RICHWINE CO.

333 S. Dearborn Street, Dept. 201, Chicago, Illinois
Sole Importers Genuine Corodite Diamonds

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The Genuine

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PATENTED

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SPECIAL SIZES

A PERFECT NOSE FOR YOU



BEFORE AFTER



FOR CHILDREN

If your nose is ill shaped, you can make it perfect with ANITA NOSE ADJUSTER. In a few weeks, in the privacy of your own room and without interfering with your daily occupation, you can remedy your nasal irregularities. No need for costly, painful operations. ANITA NOSE ADJUSTER SHAPES WHILE YOU SLEEP. QUICKLY, PAINLESSLY, PERMANENTLY AND INEXPENSIVELY. There are many imitations, but the ANITA NOSE ADJUSTER is the genuine nose adjuster, highly recommended by physicians for fractured or misshapen noses. No adjustable screws. No metal parts. Gentle, porous, FIRM and PERFECTLY COMFORTABLE. Write to-day for FREE book, "Happy Days Ahead," and our plans to help out for sizes. Return blank to us and your nose adjuster can be paid for when it reaches you.

THE ANITA COMPANY, 841 ANITA BLDG., NEWARK, N. J. (Formerly South Orange, N. J.)



MI-RITA Superfluous Hair Remover

This wonderful Hair Remover is not a depilatory as you know them. It does not burn or dissolve the hair. It is a Hair Remover that softens and seizes roots and all, leaving not a trace of hair. MI-RITA has been proven to be perfectly harmless to the skin and will remove not just the hair but its roots as well, destroying the entire duct. No burning caustics or powders are used. You will positively want to know more about this wonderful treatment and will never resort to poisonous depilatories or painful electric needle after you know what remarkable things MI-RITA can do. The treatment can be successfully used at home. MI-RITA SKIN REJUVENATOR AND WRINKLE REMOVER is an antiseptic, astringent brown paste that penetrates the pores and gives much quicker and more satisfactory results than home massage. It stimulates the circulation of the blood in the underlying skin tissues and restores the natural youthful elasticity of the skin, without the slightest irritation.

Send for Free Beauty Book listing our exclusive preparations for beautifying the skin and hair.

DR. MARGARET RUPPERT, Dept. 5, 1112-14 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A.

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Marjorie Rambeau, joins in the chorus of praise for Nature's Way to Beauty — MINERALAVA



MARJORIE RAMBEAU

The popular Star of "THE GOLDFISH" says:
*"Mineralava is the only preparation that has guarded
 and retained my youthful complexion and freshness."*

Marjorie Rambeau

AN editorial writer in "Fashionable Dress" says of MINERALAVA BEAUTY CLAY: "It is Nature's own beauty treatment—a treatment devised in Nature's own way with Nature's own ingredients—and Nature is the greatest of chemists."

In use for twenty-three years MINERALAVA until recently could only be had in exclusive beauty parlors where women gladly paid \$5, \$10 and even \$15 for a single treatment.

Now, by improved processes, this wonderful Nature product may be had at \$2.00 a bottle, each bottle containing eighteen treatments. A trifle more than 10 cents a treatment. It is sold with the absolute

guarantee of your money back, without question, if MINERALAVA does not do all and more than we claim.

Cures Skin Mal-Nutrition

IT is one positive corrective for skin-malnutrition — which is the only cause of premature wrinkles, sagging muscles, blackheads, pimples and all the blemishes of the complexion.

Apply MINERALAVA to the face, forming a dainty fragrant mask. Wash off in a few minutes and your face and neck have been restored to the pristine freshness of youth. The skin is new-born and beautiful.

Thousands of grateful women have written voluntary testimonials as to the beauty that has been brought to their faces by MINERALAVA. These endorsements from the homes of America only back up the testimonials given by such beauties of the stage and screen as Julia Sanderson, Billie Burke, Irene Bordoni, Zitelka Dolores, Kyra and many others.

Marjorie Rambeau says: "Mineralava is the only preparation that has guarded and retained my youthful complexion and freshness."

The Introductory Trial Tube

IN order that every woman may have an opportunity of testing for herself the marvellous virtues of MINERALAVA Beauty Clay, we have prepared a Trial Tube at 50 cents.

Go to your nearest Drug or Department Store and ask for MINERALAVA in the Trial Tube. If your dealer does not have it fill out the coupon below and we will at once forward to you the Trial Tube and will see that your dealer is supplied to fill your future requirements.

A MINERALAVA SKIN NEVER AGES

Mineralava

Beauty Clay—Face Finish

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Scott's Preparations, Inc.

N.N. 12-22

251 West 19th Street, New York City

Enclosed find 50c for which send me a MINERALAVA Trial Tube.

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Sousa gives you inside secrets of his success; tells how you can quickly learn saxophone, cornet, trombone—any band or orchestra instrument. Develop your musical "bump" for profit and pleasure.

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If You Can Tell it from a GENUINE DIAMOND Send it back

To prove our blue-white MEXICAN DIAMOND cannot be told from a GENUINE DIAMOND and has same DAZZLING RAINBOW FIRE, we will send a selected 1 carat gem in ladies Solitaire Ring. (Cat. price \$5.25) for Half Price to introduce, \$2.65, or in Gentle Heavy Tooth Belcher Ring (Cat. Price \$6.50) for \$3.25. Our finest 14K Gold Filled mountings. GUARANTEED 20 YEARS. SEND NO MONEY. Just mail postcard or this ad, State Size. We will mail at once. When ring arrives deposit \$1.65 for Ladies ring or \$3.25 for Gentle with postman. If not pleased return in 2 days for money back less handling charges. Write for Free catalog. Agents Wanted. MEXICAN DIAMOND IMPORTING CO., Dept. NS Las Cruces, N. Mex. (Exclusive controllers Mexican Diamonds)



Beautiful Eyelashes

If you really want beautiful, alluring, luxuriant eyelashes try LASHBROW Liquid. Compare the contrast. Send 10c to-day for trial sizes of LASHBROW Liquid and LASHBROW Pomade. Regular sizes at toilet counters everywhere.

LASHBROW LAB. CO., 2329 Lashbrow Bldg., St. Louis, U. S. A.



Help Her to Save More Lives

Last year over 100,000 lives were saved with the aid of Tuberculosis Christmas Seals. Tuberculosis is being controlled. The death rate has been cut in half. If you and others join the fight, it can be stamped out.

Buy Christmas Seals. When you see someone selling them, help the fight along by buying all you can.

Your help, the help of every happy, healthy person, is needed; and it will count.

Stamp out
Tuberculosis
with
Christmas
Seals



THE NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL
TUBERCULOSIS ASSOCIATIONS OF
THE UNITED STATES

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GENUINE \$97.50 DIAMOND

A slashing of diamond prices A Carat!
by Baschl! Price cut to \$97.50 per carat. Nothing like this in years. A sensational underselling of the market. A chance to save from 35% to 50%. A saving made possible by our recent importations. On account of the increased buying power of the American dollar in Europe, we were able to make large purchases far below market prices. This, and our plan of selling direct by mail, enables us to offer diamonds now at the startling price of only \$97.50 per carat.

A Wonderful Bargain in a Beautiful Diamond Ring

Note the exquisite diamond ring shown above—a Belais 18 k white gold ring, newest basket filigree design, choice of $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{3}{4}$ or 1 carat genuine diamond. A wonderful diamond bargain at \$97.50 per carat. Order either size diamond for free examination at your bank or express agent.

A-1001 $\frac{1}{4}$ Carat \$25.00	A-1008 $\frac{3}{4}$ Carat \$77.50
A-1003 $\frac{1}{2}$ Carat 53.75	A-1004 1 Carat 102.75

(Price includes cost of ring itself in addition to diamond.)

Send No Money Just select from our catalog the diamond you would like to see and we will send it to you for free examination. No money down, no obligation to buy. If you decide that you don't want to keep diamond, return at our expense and you won't owe us a cent. This is an open free examination offer wherein we take all the risk. You are the sole judge—no salesman at your elbow to influence you. We guarantee in full every diamond we sell.

Everything in diamond jewelry shown in this big book—and everything at the new cut in price. See the amazing offer—free.



FREE BOOK

Write today for our big new Diamond Book. See the extraordinary diamond bargains we are offering. Rare values also in fine watches, cutlery, silverware, etc.

Mail coupon today. Book comes FREE and postpaid—Clip coupon NOW!

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Gentlemen:—Please send me your big free book, telling about your price-cut in diamonds and showing your full array of diamond jewelry.

Name.....

Address.....

Every Married Couple and all who contemplate marriage SHOULD OWN



this complete informative book
"THE SCIENCE OF A NEW LIFE"

By JOHN COWAN, M.D.
408 Pages—Illustrated

Endorsed and recommended by foremost medical and religious critics throughout the U. S. Unfolds the secrets of married happiness, so often revealed too late! We can give only a few of the chapter subjects here as this book is not meant for children.

Marriage and its Advantages, Age at Which to Marry, Law of Choice, Love Analyzed, Qualities One Should Avoid in Choosing, Anatomy of Reproduction, Amatiiveness, Continence, Children, Genius, Conception, Pregnancy, Confinement, TWILIGHT SLEEP, Nursing, How a Happy Married Life is Secured.

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YOU can earn from \$1 to \$2 an hour in your spare time writing show cards. Quickly and easily learned by our new, simple "Instructograph" method. No canvassing or soliciting; we teach you how, guarantee you steady work at home no matter where you live, and pay you cash each week.

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Here's a Prescription for Coughs

For quick relief try PISO'S—A most effective syrup different from all others. Safe and sane for young and old. Pleasant—no opiates—no upset stomach. 35c and 60c sizes obtainable everywhere.

PISO'S — For Coughs & Colds

"ZEE BEAUTIFUL GIRL PICTURES"

10 wonderful poses, \$1.00; 18 specials, \$2.00. Real, "Taken From Life" photographs. Your money refunded if not satisfied. **BAIRART CO.,** Dept. 820-F Sullivan Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

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Yes, you can reduce any part of the body, such as hips, bust, abdomen, arms, ankles, double chin, etc. A six weeks' treatment sent postpaid for \$5.00. Send money, check, or money order. Guaranteed absolutely harmless.

FRENCH AMERICAN PHARMACAL CO.
1035 Tiffany St., Dept. K., New York, N. Y.

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WOMEN ADMIRE MEN

for Their Strength—

Man was meant to be woman's protector. The better he can meet this qualification, the more will he be admired. Read back through the ages and you will find this has always been true. There was a time when men fought with each other to decide who would own a certain woman just as they would fight over a pot of gold. Civilization and culture has overcome such savage conditions, but the man of strength and power has continued to have the advantage. *Ivanhoe* describes the knights entering into combat, after which the conqueror would kiss the hand or show respect in some manner to the lady he held in highest regard.

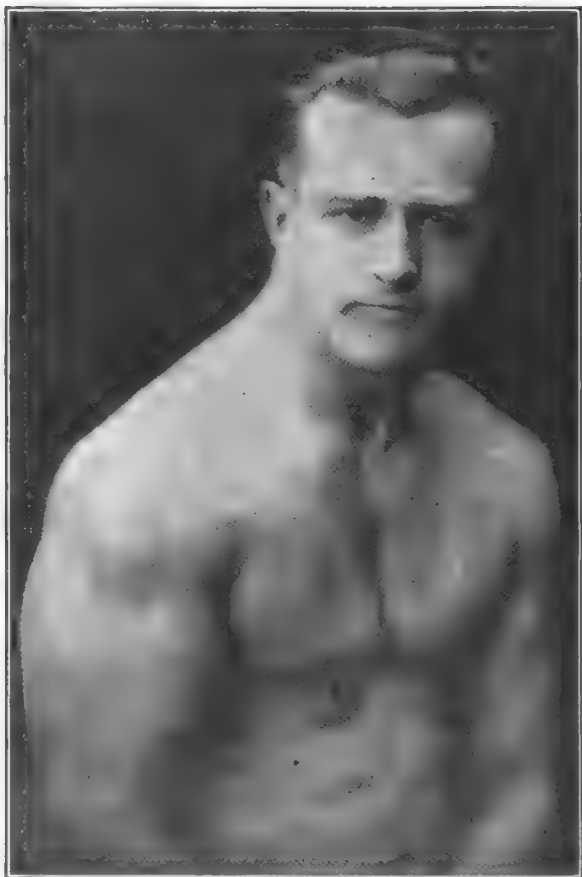
The Man of Today

What must womanhood think of the present day man? Statistics show that over 95 per cent. of us are suffering from some ailment. Our indulgence in worldly pleasures has made us a race of anaemic, flat-chested, dyspeptics. It is no wonder that man's years on earth have been shortened. What can he expect when he wastes the very strength that God gave him.

I heard one girl say the other day: "Of course I admire a strong, healthy man, but the men I meet are so weak-kneed they can barely stand up straight." It is true. The strong man of today is the exception. And that is my task. To make the exceptional man.

Do You Seek Admiration

Do you wish to be one of these weak-kneed dyspeptics? Or have you enough manhood left to say: "I will be strong"? I don't care what your present condition is. If you have a spark of will-power left, I can make you a man to be admired by all. Just think! I guarantee to put one full inch of muscle on your arms in 30 days. Yes, and two full inches on your chest in the same length of time. But that is only the start. From then on you will notice a complete change in your physical make-up. You not only develop big, brawny arms and a full chest, but a complete armor plate of muscle surrounding a body that has been rebuilt inwardly as well. You will have the flash to your eye and the spring to your step that shows you to be a human dynamo. You will be admired and sought after in both the business and social world. You will be a leader of men. All these things and more are awaiting you. It is now up to you to decide just what manner of man you will be. Come then, for time flies.



Earle E. Liederman as he is to-day

Send for my book

"MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT"

It is chock-full of photographs of myself and my numerous pupils. Also contains a treatise on the human body and what can be done with it. This book is bound to interest you and thrill you. It will be an impetus—an inspiration to every red-blooded man. All I ask you to cover is the price of wrapping and postage—10 cents. Remember this does not obligate you in any way. Don't delay one minute. This may be the turning-point in your life today. So tear off the coupon and mail at once while it is on your mind.

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN
305 Broadway Dept. 1712 New York City

EARLE E. LIEDERMAN
Dept. 1712, 305 Broadway, N. Y. City.

Dear Sir:—I enclose herewith 10 cents for which you are to send me, without any obligation on my part whatever, a copy of your latest book, "Muscular Development." (Please write or print plainly.)

Name

Address

City..... State.....

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Truth Courts the Light but Error Shuns It

The chiropractor tells you his message in English because he wants you to understand. He doesn't camouflage his ignorance with Latin.

Truth is the same always and everywhere, and because the practice of Chiropractic is based upon truth it is a universally efficient method.

The laws of nature are the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and because Chiropractic is based upon natural law, it does not change its explanation of disease with the seasons.

Since Chiropractic depends upon the operation of natural law for its results, chiropractors do not require faith or credulity of their patients.

Chiropractic is a demonstrable science. It is the most efficient method of getting the sick well and any chiropractor will gladly show you just what he does, and tell you why he does it.

Employ none out a competent chiropractor.

DEFINITION
The practice of Chiropractic consists of the adjustment, with the hands, of the movable segments of the spinal column to normal position for the purpose of releasing the prisoned impulse

**Ask Your
Chiropractor
for
"The Last Word"**

Write for information regarding Chiropractors or Schools to the

UNIVERSAL CHIROPRACTORS ASSOCIATION, DAVENPORT, IOWA, U. S. A.

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IN THIS DAY and AGE attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible, for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "looks," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. Permit no one to see you looking otherwise; it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new **Nose-Shaper**, "TRADOS Model 25," corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation, quickly, safely and permanently. Is pleasant and does not interfere with one's occupation, being worn at night.

YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FACE BUT YOUR NOSE?



Write today for booklet, which tells you how to correct ill-shaped noses without cost if not satisfied.
M. TRILETY, Face Specialist, 1782 Ackerman Bldg., Binghamton, N.Y.

GET RID OF THAT FAT

Free Trial Treatment

Sent on request. Ask for my "pay-when-reduced" offer. My treatment has reduced at the rate of a pound a day. No dieting, no exercise, absolutely safe and sure method. Let me send you proof at my expense. **Dr. R. Newman**, Licensed Physician, State New York, 286 Fifth Avenue, New York, Desk M-1.

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Partial List of Contents

- *Woman's Error and Her Debt. Two Classes of Women. Griefs of Despair.
- *When Should a Woman Avoid Having Children?
- *Birth Control—A Parent's Problem or Woman's?
- *Are Preventive Means Certain? Woman and the New Morality. Legislating Woman's Morals. Why Not Birth Control Clinics in America? Progress We Have Made.

*Any one of these chapters alone is worth many times the price of the book.



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California Fig-Nuts Agar

—the perfect corrective—a scientific food composed of vital, health-giving products of nature—figs, nuts, whole wheat and agar-agar.

The figs, nuts and whole wheat contain all the blood-producing, body-building elements required for a nutritious, nourishing food—dextrinized for easy digestibility and assimilation. The addition of Agar-agar adds the essential element of an efficient corrective.

What Is Agar-Agar?

Agar-agar is a marine algae—a sea gelatine—tasteless, colorless. While passing through the intestinal tract it gives great aid to sluggish muscles, lubricates the walls of the intestines, increases peristaltic action and carries moisture to the lower bowels—softening the stool and furnishing a very easy, thorough cleansing.

Unlike purgatives, cathartics or other artificial means—it has no tendency to weaken or irritate—and the results are soothing and permanent. As it passes through the body agar-agar thoroughly cleanses the walls of the intestines and bowels—wiping up and carrying away all waste matter into the colon for easy elimination.

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A dish of California Fig-Nuts Agar once or twice a day will relieve the most chronic case of constipation. Regular use of this nutritious food protects you from the many ills caused by constipation.

California Fig-Nuts Agar—Used by Old and Young

Invalids, convalescents and children can be fed California Fig-Nuts Agar with equally satisfactory results.

Its deliciously tempting brown granules have a most distinctive flavor—crisp and wholesome—ready to serve out of the package at any time. It may also be made into a variety of delightful dishes for breakfast, luncheon or dinner.

A Natural Food That Helps Nature

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It Corrects the Habit of Constipation

and brings about a normal and healthy condition of the intestines. Thousands of men, women and children all over the country eat at least one meal of Fig-Nuts Agar every day. They have used it to correct subnormal conditions—and now it is their daily safeguard against disease.

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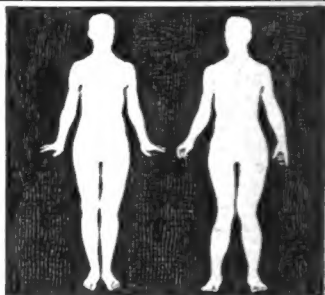


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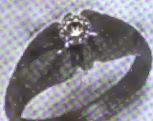
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C10 - Hand engraved of 18K solid white gold, perfect cut, blue-white diamond \$50.00



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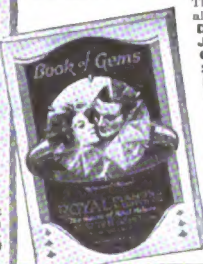
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